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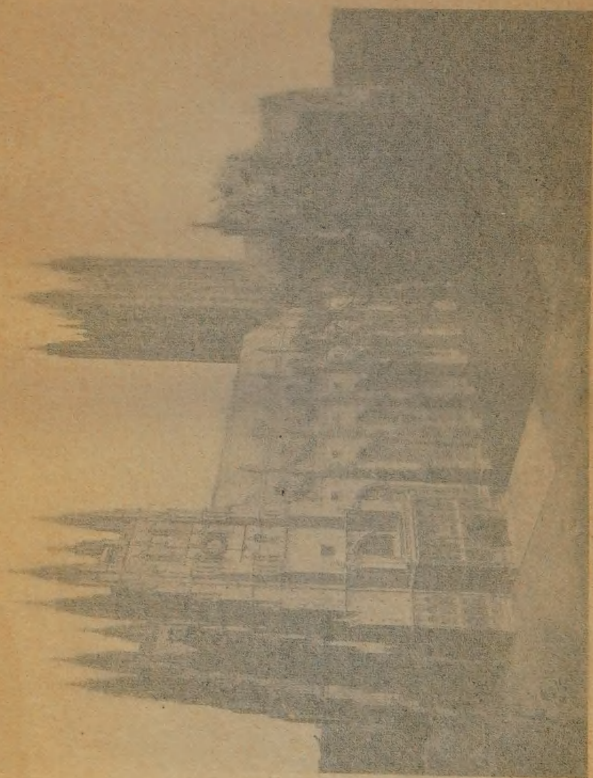




AN ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY  
FOR CHILDREN







CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

746  
55

AN  
ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY  
FOR CHILDREN

A.D. 597-1066

BY  
MARY E. SHIPLEY

WITH A PREFACE BY  
WILLIAM EDWARD COLLINS, D.D.  
BISHOP OF GIBRALTAR

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS AND THREE MAPS

METHUEN & CO.  
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.  
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*First Published in 1905*

THE Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord ;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word :  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy Bride ;  
With His own Blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.

S. J. STONE



## PREFACE

THE importance of the study of the past was never greater than it is at the present time, and never was it in greater danger of being neglected. The range of human life is widening from day to day, and fresh problems are found to face us at every turn; new acquisitions to our knowledge are being made constantly, and the old categories often prove on trial to be inadequate to comprehend them. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that there should be a tendency to assume that we have outgrown our past; that its lessons are no longer lessons for us; that we can turn our backs upon it and go forward with a light heart. Certainly there is such a tendency. Branches of learning which do not seem to offer food for immediate consumption are largely depreciated and neglected; the classical studies—which, although they may have received too exclusive a devotion in times past, are at any rate worthy of their place amongst other studies—are now almost banned by many who have a horror of what the older political economists used to describe as “unproductive labour.” History itself has suffered as the result of this tendency. It would hardly be possible, indeed, for the study which of all

studies has the most direct bearing on practical life to be left out of account in an age whose chief limitation is that it is too "practical." But it is much to be feared that the study of history is coming to be looked at in many quarters (including some of our best-known historical schools) too exclusively from the point of view of to-day; that by some teachers nothing is regarded as worthy of study unless it can be utilised immediately; and that instead of endeavouring to realise the life of the past (which is the true function of historical study), they are endeavouring to discover such facts and to elucidate such principles as can be brought to bear directly upon present-day problems. To do this is to subordinate the whole to the part, if not indeed to part with the substance in grasping at the shadow; for it is inevitable that they who explore the past in the hope of finding one particular thing, are so far rendering themselves incapable of learning the lessons of the past in their whole breadth and fulness.

The true justification of historical study lies in the conviction, which historical study in its turn ever deepens and intensifies, that "through the ages an increasing purpose runs": the conviction that there is nothing merely contingent in the course of human affairs. In the light of this fact, the investigation of the past must ever have a value quite apart from any utilitarian purpose to which it can be applied in the present; for the past and the present are really one whole, and the true meaning of the latter is only to be fully discerned when it is viewed in its connection with the former.

Such, in particular, is the value of Church History. To the Christian, the true meaning of his faith is at once unfolded and vindicated in history; and the embodiment of that faith in the historic Church of Christ is a fact of the most profound significance—no mere appendage to the faith, but of its very essence. Apart from this he knows of no way of realising adequately the nature of the Church at all, so far as one side of it is concerned; for the study of history at once sets this before him, and sets him on his guard against inadequate ideas of it and *a priori* assumptions concerning it. He who knows nothing of the history of the Church is thereby incapacitated from understanding its true character; he who only knows that history as distorted by popular misconceptions, whether legal or sectarian, will never really do it justice.

Nobody who is really conversant with the subject can doubt that there is much need amongst us for better instruction in English Church History. Fictions which have been exploded for half a century or more, and one-sided statements which represent a point of view which is as extinct as the dodo, are still to be found in historical readers and compendious works on English history which are in general use in our schools. The utterances of politicians and lawyers, from prime ministers and judges of the High Court downwards, often leave much to be desired in point both of accuracy and insight. Popular fallacies die hard, and never harder than when they have come to be identified with the views or the notions of some particular party; and such is the case here. It is not

enough, under such circumstances, to refer the offenders to standard works on the subject; they will not read them. To leave the matter alone, in the hope that truth, which is greater than fiction, will at length oust it, is not much more satisfactory. What is really needed, in order that this may take place, is to begin from the beginning, and teach the children; and this it is which my friend Miss Shipley is trying to do in this little book.

The task is by no means an easy one; and such a book, to succeed in its object, must fulfil many conditions. To begin with, it must be honest and ingenuous; to attempt to oust "history with a purpose" by substituting for it history with a different purpose would only make things worse. It must be straightforward and connected; for children, as every true teacher knows, love to follow out the development of things, and do not merely desire to be amused with interesting anecdotes. It must be true in proportion and general presentation—things which are of far greater importance, especially for our present purpose, than minute accuracy in detail. And yet, again, it must be brightly and simply written, or it will never win the love of the children; and if it does not succeed in this it will not be remembered long.

It is because I believe that Miss Shipley's book fulfils these conditions in a very remarkable degree that I venture to commend it very warmly to English parents and teachers, for the children committed to their charge. There are admirable manuals of English Church history for the professed student and

for the general reader ; there are short outlines which are sufficient to recall the facts to those who already have some acquaintance with them ; and there are other works which may perhaps supply the interpretation of the facts to those who already possess some knowledge of English history. But I know of nothing which covers anything like the same ground as this does, or which covers it so well. I believe that it is calculated to do a great deal of good, and I pray that it may.

W. E. GIBRALTAR

TRIPOLI OF BARBARY,  
*February 11, 1905*



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# AN ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY FOR CHILDREN

## CHAPTER I

### OLD BRITAIN

I THINK we should very much like to see how our dear island looked long ago in the days when Julius Cæsar, the famous Roman general, came from France (which was then called Gaul), and conquered it.

We have been told a little about Britain in those days: how that the people were wild, and lived on the flesh of animals caught in the chase, or on berries and acorns. Whenever we hear of an ancient Briton, most of us picture to ourselves some one clad in rough skins or painted blue. Now this is, no doubt, quite true of some of the people and at some times, but not of all; any more than it would be true, in describing the people of our own day, to say that all our girls wear woollen cross-overs, or picture hats, or tam-o'-shanters; or that all our boys dress in sailor suits, or knickerbockers and gaiters, or striped blazers.

We dress according to our age, or our position in life, or our means; and we dress differently at different times.

Now, I wish you to make good use of your maps while reading this little book, as otherwise you will find it difficult to understand.

And, first of all, I want you to remember that many, many years before Julius Cæsar came to Britain, or Albion, as it was sometimes called, the old inhabitants of our island had been conquered by the Goidels, a people from the continent of Europe, near where the Rhine falls into the North Sea. These people were Celts, of the same race as the Irish, and those in the north-west of France in our own day. Later on the Goidels had to give way to another Celtic race, the Brythons (or Britons), who probably came from Gaul, and, entering the island by the south-east, drove the Goidels into the mountains and western parts of the island, so that they had no place to dwell in but Wales, of which they had nearly the whole to themselves.

It is important to remember that there were two races in Britain at the time of the Roman invasion, because, though we generally call all the people Britons, there was a great difference in the two tribes, especially in their religion.

You can understand that those who lived near the coast, and had therefore more intercourse with the mainland of Europe, were more civilised than those who dwelt far away in the mountain fastnesses and among rocks and caves. So I feel sure, that in the old, old times, about fifty-five years before that

happy day when the Holy Babe was born at Bethlehem, some of the ladies in Southern Britain dressed in fair white linen or woven wool; and the chiefs or kings would wear robes of fur, very much better and softer than those worn by the poor. Some of the British ladies would wear golden rings and bracelets; and pearls from their own native rivers.

We know that there were tin mines in Cornwall, and that from very early days, perhaps in the time of Solomon, about one thousand years before Julius Cæsar came to Britain, the Phœnicians, a people from Tyre, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, had traded with the dwellers in Cornwall and the Scilly Isles.

There was corn in our island; and men from Marseilles, in the south of Gaul, brought their oil and wine and woven stuffs of many colours, and exchanged them for the lovely furs which the Britons sold, and for their fine wheat, or for tin and gold from Cornwall, or the large, famous British pearls.

The poor people lived in low huts of mud and wattle, a kind of hurdle; but the chiefs and others who were richer had their houses made of wattle too, perhaps, but hung with skins—wolf-skins very often, and fox and beaver. There would be weapons on the walls too, and shields of battle.

We are sure, if they were so skilful as to make those dreadful war-chariots, with scythes sticking out of the axles, they could make other things too, such as tables and chairs and benches and many other useful articles which go to make life comfortable and pleasant

We have heard of their boats and coracles—wicker-work covered with skins, in which they journeyed on the rivers and sometimes out at sea.

We know they were splendid horsemen, and in their great war-chariots they could drive their fiery steeds close to the very edge of a steep cliff, where a false step would mean death; and then, when there was scarcely room to turn, would sweep them round swiftly and cleverly in a way that would frighten us very much in these days. In their wars, as well as in the chase, they used hunting dogs; and we can believe that, like all people used to train and take pride in their animals, they were very fond of them.

It was a very different life from our own, but it was not so altogether savage as we sometimes think, at least in the days when the great Roman general saw the white cliffs of Kent glistening in the sun as he stood on the opposite shores of Gaul.

Of course, if we went farther back still, long before those who were here when the Goidels came, we should find another race of men: people who used flint weapons, and who certainly knew nothing of white linen robes and woven stuffs and bronze shields of battle.

Farther back too, when the elephant and bison trampled down the undergrowth of our forests and roamed at will over the moors and hills. But we should feel quite lost in those far-back days; so we will just now content ourselves with Britain as it was in the year 55 B.C.

Was it the same sort of country? Certainly; as

regards the position of the hills and the valleys and most of the rivers. But there were miles and miles of wild moor and forest, very many more trees than now, and dark fens, full of reeds and rushes, where now are smiling fields of corn.

Still, there were broad patches of land under cultivation, and some parts less tangled and dense with brushwood than others; and as you think of the little British children playing in the woods, where squirrels and rabbits as well as wild boars lived, or by the peaceful streams rippling gently over the pebbles, you may be quite sure they gathered snow-drops and celandines, violets and primroses, daisies and buttercups in the sweet spring-time, as children do now.

On the edge of the meres and lakes the dainty birch, with its silver skin, drooped its graceful fingers over the water, and the alders and willow-herb and meadow-sweet fringed the banks of the streams. The water-rat would dive among the bulrushes, and the dragon-fly would flash its beautiful wings in the sun, while the kingfisher in its blue and green and bright purple plumage gleamed gaily as it darted from some drooping bough upon the fish beneath.

The daffodils nodded their lovely heads at the roots of the trees, and the wood-anemones and wood-sorrel, wild hyacinths and purple orchis, bloomed just as freely for the ancient British children as for us.

Elms and beeches, sycamores and ash and oak filled the vast forests; wild strawberries grew in the heathy lands, where the rabbits frisked and gamboled; and blackberries and nuts were as good

then as now. Great boughs of hawthorn, pink and white, would decorate the mud houses in the early summer, when the glory of the yellow gorse was on the moors and waste places.

The beds in summer would be made of fragrant heath, springy and pleasant to rest upon when the day's work or play was over; and acorn cups and chestnuts would be just as charming playthings all those hundreds of years ago as they are now.

I saw a piece of amber  
Many a century old,—  
A large, smooth piece of amber  
The colour of molten gold.

Safe in its golden casket  
I saw a cobweb grey,  
And, caught in its snare of cross-lines,  
A fly that had gone astray.

Its wings had rainbow colours,  
Lilac and pink and green :  
Through the clear yellow amber  
I saw the glistening' sheen.

And near the treacherous cobweb  
I saw a primrose pale,  
Like those we find by hundreds  
In wood and lane and vale.

And I knew, and I felt so thankful  
That the Britain of long ago  
Was the same dear land we live in ;  
For the amber told me so.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD RELIGIONS

I THINK we may be quite sure that although the Britons were rough in their ways, uneducated, and with manners not the best, still, fathers and mothers loved their children then as now; and boys and girls were good or naughty, as quick to feel unkindness, as ready to be happy as you are.

Does it seem strange to believe this? I think not. One thing is strange to us, strange and sad. These little children, who were sometimes glad and sometimes sorry as you are, were never quite safe from being carried off as slaves by the traders who came to Britain, and so they often had fears which, happily, you know nothing about; and when they were frightened, they did not know of their Father in heaven, and so could not ask Him to protect them from danger, as you do when you say—

“Through the long night watches  
May Thine angels spread  
Their white wings above me,  
Watching round my bed.”

neither by night nor day could they feel quite safe.

The religion of the Southern Britons was very

different from ours. They were pagans, and, like most pagans, worshipped a great many gods, who could not help them to be good or make them happy.

But if the little Brythons were often frightened and unhappy, I think they were better off than the poor little Goidels, who might at any time be liable to a terrible and most cruel death if their priests, the Druids, said their gods were angry.

The Druids were the priests of the Goidel race. Theirs was a dark and gloomy creed; for though the Druids had more learning than any people in the island, they kept the Goidels in ignorance of even the little they knew themselves; and thus they had great power over them.

They had wonderful temples of enormous stones, which are generally called Druidical remains, though it is almost certain they were brought here by a race of men who lived long before the time of the Druids. You may see some of these stones in Devonshire and Cornwall and Kent; and there are large ones at Brimham Crag in Yorkshire, and you have heard of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain.

How those huge stones ever got there, or how the temples were built, no man knows. But we are told that the Druids—who lived in groves of oaks, and who were dressed in long white robes, sometimes with golden crowns on their heads, and at others with wreaths of oak leaves, or a serpent's egg placed where all could see it—offered prayers and sometimes human sacrifices in these temples.

They had enormous wicker enclosures made in the

STONEHENGE





shape of a man, and in these the poor people would be burnt alive.

It was all very, very dreadful. I think they believed that there was one God, chief of all, who had created everything; but they did not think of Him as a loving Father who delights to see His children happy. They thought if storms came, or bad seasons or disease, that He was angry, and would not be kind again till they had offered up some man or woman or child as a sacrifice.

But their religion was also one of nature-worship. I mean, they prayed to the fountains and streams and hills and trees and plants.

Do you know how the mistletoe grows?

It has no root and does not spring from the ground, but it grows on other trees—on apple trees, on the hawthorn, and on the Druids' sacred tree, the oak. The Druids had a grand festival, called Yule, when the days were shortest, as at our own dear Christmas. Then the people would go in large numbers to the woods, following a procession of priests. Then the Arch-druid (the chief priest) with a golden sickle would cut down the mistletoe from the trees, and bear it home rejoicing. They struck their harps and sang their hymns to wild, rugged tunes; and every one revered the mistletoe because it did not grow like other plants, and so they thought it was divine.

*Yule* comes from a very, very old word which means *wheel*. At the time in winter when the days are shortest it was the custom long ago, in the land the Druids came from, for the priest to take a large wheel of very dry wood. This he twirled round and

round and round so fast that at last the parts, by constant rubbing together, caught fire. Then all the people came and lighted sticks at it, with which again they kindled a huge log of wood, called the Yule (or wheel) log, from which they kept their fires alight till the great festival came round again. They do not burn the Yule log in Germany now, but they have a Christmas Tree instead, full of lighted candles, to celebrate the Birth of Christ, the Light of the World.

And the Druids worshipped the sun.

Now, I always think it is not wonderful that nearly all the heathen races have worshipped the sun.

Perhaps you have heard of Phœbus Apollo, beloved and worshipped by the Greeks; and you will learn about the same sun-god, under various names, as you grow older and read more. The Druids called him Bel. I know a hill in Devonshire called Belstone Tor, where the Druids kept high festival on Midsummer Day.

Even now in Germany on that day great bonfires are lighted on the mountains of the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, and on mountain-tops in some of the regions by the banks of the Rhine. These old customs surviving of bygone pagan days link us with the past in a wonderful manner, and make some things easy which would otherwise be hard to understand.

It seems to me that as the pagans knew no better, we can quite understand why they worshipped the sun. They saw how his rays warmed them, and lighted up the world. How the warmth of the sun

ripened the corn and the fruits and the flowers; how all things living seemed to wait upon his gracious beams for life and health and food.

And then the beauty and the glory of it!

Is there anything more splendid than a magnificent sunset, when the sun sinks behind gorgeous masses of cloud—purple, crimson, and gold; when the sky all round is a faint green, melting into primrose, and every little feathery cloud high up catches the glory, and makes one think of the Heavenly City, "Jerusalem the Golden," too lovely for words to describe?

Is there anything more beautiful than sunset?

Nothing; unless it be sunrise.

Did you ever see the sun rise? Have you ever seen, in the sweet summer-time, the fields and hills and woods lying peaceful and still, with a soft veil of mist over them, in the dim twilight just before dawn? The cows and sheep and horses are lying asleep in the meadows; not a sound is heard from the trees or the eaves. Each little bird sleeps with its head under its wing. The very air is still. Quietly, quietly in the eastern sky the pale stars fade one by one. Then the soft grey sky takes on a pearly tint; then it is the softest primrose, then pale pink, then rose-colour. Then the primrose deepens to saffron; and if you listen you will hear the birds begin a gentle twitter, and you will feel a soft breeze fan your cheek. All the while the beautiful tints in the east are glowing and deepening—the rose becomes crimson, the saffron deepens to gold, and the glorious sun rises and sheds his beams around.

The flowers wake up, the mist turns to drops of diamond hues in the light; the cock crows, and the birds begin to sing joyously. The cows and horses get up and graze; the geese come out and spread themselves like a patch of snow on the common. It is day, beautiful day! Another day to be good in, and to make others happy, and to thank God!

Yes, sunrise is glorious. Perhaps in winter there is even more glory than in summer. It is so beautiful to see the morning star shining like gold in the clear blue, and perhaps a crescent moon—both very lovely just before the sun rises and puts out their light.

No! I do not wonder that those who knew no better worshipped the sun. The sun is a sign of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is called the Sun of Righteousness, and in our dear old Christmas hymn we say He is risen

“With healing on His wings.”

Now, I am sure you will like to know how all the people of Britain learnt to worship the Sun of Righteousness, and how His bright beams spread over our land and chased away the darkness in the days of old.

## CHAPTER III

### ROMAN BRITAIN

**I**T was fifty-five years B.C. (that is, before the Birth of Christ) that Julius Cæsar came to Britain and made it tributary to Rome. This means that although the Britons kept their own kings, still they were really subjects of the Roman emperors, who afterwards sent governors to represent them in Britain.

No doubt the connection of our little island, far away in the cold northern seas, with Rome, the centre of the civilised world, gave Britain some advantages by increasing its trade with other countries. But it was not till about a hundred years later that the work of the Conquest began in real earnest, by command of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 42.

Meanwhile very wonderful events had taken place.

The Holy Babe born at Bethlehem, the Saviour, Christ the Lord, had lived on earth a life most holy, and died upon the Cross a death most sad, and all for the salvation of the world.

After His Resurrection He appeared many times to His beloved disciples, and just before His Ascension into heaven He bade them tarry at Jerusalem till the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, should

come to them and give them power for the work they had to do.

You know how this promise comforted them in their loneliness, and that on the day of Pentecost "they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

(You can read all the marvellous account in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.)

Now, why were these wonderful powers given to them? In an ordinary way it takes a long time to learn a language, and they were unlearned and ignorant men.

God worked a miracle for them, that they might go at once, without loss of time, to spread the glad tidings of great joy to all nations.

This was the beginning of the Church of Christ, the Church into which you were baptized; the Church, that company of faithful Christians which is entrusted with the missions of Christ its Head.

It began in that Upper Room in Jerusalem on that first Whitsun Day. Some members of it went in one direction, some in another, and before long another apostle was added to their band, the brave, the learned and devoted St. Paul.

You know that he went to Rome, that he was imprisoned there on account of his religion, that he

numbered among his converts some of Cæsar's household, and that he suffered martyrdom there for the sake of Christ.

But what has all this to do with Britain?

Very much, if we consider it carefully.

You would like to know who first brought the Christian Faith to Britain? I wish I could tell you, but of that there is no certain record. There are indeed many legends and stories, which you may read for yourself, but though some of these are extremely beautiful, we cannot rely upon their truth. They probably have some foundation in fact; but in real history we look for the truth, so we must keep the legends separate, though I am sure you will like them very much.

No one knows by whom the Faith was brought to Britain, or at what time. Probably among the Roman soldiers there were some who had listened to St. Paul or his converts. We must remember that, at first, many of our Lord's followers were among the poor. He was Himself "despised and rejected of men," and many of the early Christians were, in the eyes of the world, men of no account.

But these men, finding their religion such a joy to them after the unsatisfying paganism in which they had been brought up, would be sure to tell others of it. It is only selfish people who like to keep their good things to themselves; and the religion of Christ, when it sinks into our hearts, should make us try to be unselfish and Christ-like, for we know He went about doing good.

So we may well believe that it was from some of

those who came with the conquering legions from Rome that the Britons first heard about Christ.

The Druids had suffered severely at the hands of the Roman emperor, Claudius. He had driven them into the Isle of Mona (now called Anglesea), and had forbidden them to practise their religious rites elsewhere.

But there was a sadder day still in store for the Druids. In the year 61 A.D., Suetonius Paulinus, who was then in command of Britain, went with his troops to Mona to subdue the island.

He was so very cruel that he burned all the Druids he could find, and destroyed their groves and altars. But though most of the Druids were killed, some were left, and they kept up their religion for many years to come.

As to the Britons in other parts of the country, the Romans thought nothing of their beliefs, and set up the worship of their own false gods.

The Roman rule was very good for Britain. Of course, at first, the people did not like being conquered; no one does; but after a while they saw how much they could learn from the Romans, and that a more civilised way of life was pleasant and good for them.

Besides, at first, it was not so entirely subdued but that they had their own tribes and kings as of old, only subject to Rome.

The Romans soon altered the face of the country. The four great roads which went from one end of the island to the other, in different ways, were, in the days of the Britons, rough tracks through the forests

and over the hills. But the Romans were splendid road-makers, and they turned these muddy forest tracks into beautiful wide roads, hard and smooth, so that it must have been a pleasure to use them. And they were made so strong and firm that to this day we use them and speak of them as the old Roman roads.

They built two great stone walls across the north of Britain to keep out the Picts, who lived in the Highlands, and who were very fond of marauding and troubling their southern neighbours. The people who were then called Scots did not live in what we call Scotland: they dwelt in the north of Ireland, called Scotia.

Then the towns, composed of rude huts and other buildings of mud and wattle, with a steep bank round them, disappeared; and in their place were walled cities, full of beautiful stone houses and temples and baths. There were gates in the walls, so that at night the cities were well defended. One of these strong old gateways, called Newport Arch, is standing, firm and massive, in Lincoln at this day.

Schools were built, where the little British and Roman children learnt their lessons together; and they were, in time, well content and happy.

All this took many, many years. Most of the Romans continued pagans; still we may believe that the Christian religion was working like leaven among the poorer people, the great patrician nobles thinking, with contempt, it was a religion only fit for slaves.

Certain it is that, by some means or other, whether from Gaul or from Rome no one can now tell us,

the Christian religion had been brought into Britain before 200 A.D.

This we are told by Tertullian and Origen, two well-known writers of that time ; and more than this we cannot say.

We must be content to know that, by that time, over our own dear island the Sun of Righteousness *had* risen "with healing on His wings."

## CHAPTER IV

### BRITAIN'S PROTO-MARTYR—FOUR COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH

WE must bear in mind that, just as the early dawn is very, very pale and faint, so, at first, the life of the Church in Britain was very feeble. It is always slow work to induce people to give up what they have known and believed all their lives.

We know that missionaries in our own day find the natives of the countries to which they go, cling long to their old superstitions.

It is probable that most of the early Christians in Britain were Romans, though, undoubtedly, there were Britons among them.

The British Church was greatly dependent on the Church of Gaul.

Its liturgy (which means a form of public worship) was Gallican; its bishops were consecrated by Gallican bishops; and in all its difficulties it sent to the Church of Gaul for help.

Still though it was weak and, in a measure, dependent, yet in its organisation, its three Orders—bishops, priests, and deacons,—and in its Rule it was a true part of the Holy Catholic Church.

The manner in which the Roman emperors perse-

cuted the Christians was quite dreadful. In all sorts of terrible ways they tried to make the followers of Christ give up their faith.

The last and worst of these Ten Persecutions was that under Diocletian in 304 A.D.; and it was then that St. Alban suffered martyrdom.

It is quite probable that there had been unknown martyrs in Britain long before. But as St. Alban is the first of whom we have any record, he is called the British Proto-Martyr, or first martyr. A martyr is one who dies for his faith.

This is the story.

A certain Christian priest, fleeing from his persecutors, took refuge in the house of Alban, a soldier of high birth, who lived at Verulam, an ancient city in the part we now call Hertfordshire.

Alban was a pagan; but seeing the holy conduct of his guest, and hearing from him the truths of his religion, he became a Christian himself. It was not known he was a convert, when the Roman governor of that part, hearing that he was sheltering the priest, sent a party of soldiers to take to execution the Christian teacher of whom they were in search.

Now Alban was bent on saving the good priest, and persuaded him to change clothes with him. And the soldiers took Alban, in the priest's long cloak or cassock, and brought him before the judge.

Then the judge asked him questions about his family; to which Alban replied—

“To what purpose do you inquire of my family? If you would know my religion, I am a Christian.”

The governor then asked his name.

On hearing that it was Alban, he told him to sacrifice to the gods.

This Alban, being a Christian, refused to do. He was then ordered to be at once executed.

Just beyond the city walls was a grassy slope, spangled with flowers, leading down to a peaceful stream.

Crowds of people followed the brave Alban; and the executioner who was to have beheaded him, seeing how grandly he bore himself, as a victor ready to be crowned, perceived that his religion was good with a goodness beyond that of the pagans. They were brave, certainly, but they lacked the heavenly joy which lit up the face of Alban.

As they neared the place of execution by the purling stream, the soldier threw away his sword, and declared himself a Christian too.

So both were beheaded together, but we do not know the soldier's name.

The spot where the two martyrs gave up their lives was held sacred; and afterwards a church was built upon it.

Later on, a king of Mercia, named Offa, in the eighth century, founded a monastery there. Later still, there rose a more beautiful abbey, which is now St. Alban's Cathedral.

I think we cannot see it without remembering Alban and his convert, and thinking of the grand old words—

“The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.”

Two other British Christians are said to have suffered martyrdom at Cærleon-on-Usk, in Monmouth-

shire, at this time. Their names were Aaron and Julius.

The Venerable Bede in his *History* says there were "many more who yielded their souls up, to enjoy in the heavenly city a reward for the sufferings which they had passed through."

We should like to know their names, but they have been forgotten.

"None can tell us ; all is written  
In the Lamb's great Book of life,  
All the faith, and prayer, and patience,  
All the toiling, and the strife ;  
There are told Thy hidden treasures ;  
Number us, O Lord, with them,  
When Thou makest up the jewels  
Of Thy living diadem."

It was either at this time or soon afterwards that Diocletian decided to govern the Empire of Rome by four Cæsars.

Britain was governed by Constantius, who had his court at York. He died there in 306 A.D. ; and his son Constantine became the first Christian emperor.

And now the Church had rest in Britain and in other countries.

We are told by Bede that "when the storm of persecution ceased, the faithful Christians, who during the time of danger had hidden themselves in woods and deserts and secret caves, appearing in public, rebuilt the churches, which had been levelled with the ground."

And peace continued among the Britons for some time.

It was in the year 327 A.D. that Constantine removed the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople.

In the fourth century, the one about which we are now reading, were held four important Councils of the Church.

The Church everywhere had passed through a time of great peril and distress. Often the worship of the Christians was held in caves and dens and unfrequented places, where they might perhaps be undisturbed. But they were liable at any time to be seized and imprisoned, tortured, and put to death.

But now brighter days had come; and it was found that, owing to the Christians being often left without teachers and guides, there was some ignorance in their faith; and, occasionally, some serious errors had arisen, which it was very needful to correct.

So it was most wisely decided that learned Christians from all parts should meet and discuss the points on which they were in doubt.

You know that in these days the English bishops and the bishops from our Colonies meet at Lambeth when there are important points to settle. But this was not a meeting for British Christians only, but for all Christendom—all countries owning the Christian faith.

In 314, at the Council of Arles in Gaul, there were three British bishops: Eborius, Bishop of York; Restitutus, Bishop of London; and Adelphius, who was Bishop of either Cærlon-on-Usk or of Lincoln (most probably Lincoln).

So you see the Church in Britain had been growing steadily, if slowly, since the martyrdom of St. Alban ten years before.

Persecution cannot kill, nor storms of trouble ever destroy, the Church of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head. In times of distress its members grow stronger in their love for one another and in their devotion to God.

In 325, one year after the Christian Constantine became sole emperor, there was a very large Council at Nicæa in Asia Minor, at which he presided. Here a most important decision was made, to which the British bishops gave their assent, though we have no reason to suppose they were present themselves.

At this Council the Nicene Creed was drawn up.

This Creed we always repeat in the office for Holy Communion. Think how many centuries it has been the voice of our belief: the watchword of our Church; and be very thankful for that Council of Nicæa.

At one time when the Creeds were said in church, every man who wore a sword laid his hand on its hilt, in token that he was willing to defend the Faith with his life.

Again, at the Council of Sardica (in Illyria, north of Greece) in 347, an important decision was made, and the bishops of Britain approved of it, though they were absent from the Council.

In 359, at Ariminum (on the western coast of Italy), another Council was held, at which British bishops were present, though I cannot tell you how many.

It was the Emperor Constantius, son of the Emperor Constantine, who summoned the Council of Ariminum.

He offered, as was the custom, to pay the expenses of the bishops. Most of them refused; but there were three bishops from Britain who felt obliged to accept the emperor's bounty.

Britain was not as prosperous as it had been, or you may be quite sure these three bishops would have made a very great effort to pay their own expenses. However, there were some other British bishops present who were sufficiently well off to pay not only their own charges, but those of their poorer friends, and they gladly did so.

Many very important matters were settled at these Councils. You must try to remember their names and dates.

Arles, 314.

Nicæa, 325.

Sardica, 347.

Ariminum, 359.

And of these the most important is Nicæa. It is called The Great Council of Nicæa.

## CHAPTER V

### ST. NINIAN, A BRITISH MISSIONARY— PELAGIUS, A FALSE TEACHER

I HOPE you have not forgotten the two different races which peopled Britain at the time of the Roman invasion.

We call in our own day all the inhabitants of our island Britons ; but, if we go into closer particulars, we say some are English, some are Scots, some are Welsh. In the same way we speak of the Britons of old, but we must not forget they were two races, the Brythons and the Goidels, and that the Goidels had been driven westward by the Brythons, into what we now call Wales.

The Brythons, who received Christianity during the Roman rule, gave up once and for all their many gods. They turned completely round. This is what is meant by "conversion," a turning round.

But the Goidels when they became Christians, and we cannot be sure of the time, though it must have been before the English Conquest, simply turned their religious practices from pagan to Christian, and perhaps kept still some remains of heathenism in their Christianity.

They had always lived in tribes, with a priest to





teach them ; and they still lived in communities, with a priest at their head ; only now, happily, the priest was a Christian, not a Druid, and the tribe of the priest became a society of monks, with an abbot at their head, and bishops to ordain others.

They were quite satisfied with this primitive kind of religion, a religion which was very real, because of the warm hearts of those who professed it, and of the devotion of the tribes to the priests who ruled them.

You must always remember that Goidels and Brythons were alike Celts ; and the Celtic nature is one full of fire and devotion, impulsive, deeply loving, and sympathetic.

These are fine qualities ; but something else is wanted, which, at that time, they lacked. You will read of it by and by.

We have no records of missionary work among the Goidels, beyond what we may call their Home Missions.

The first missionary name, which greets us towards the close of the fourth century—the century which had seen the martyrdom of St. Alban, and the four Councils of the Church,—is that of St. Ninian, a Brython, who lived in either Cumberland or Galloway, districts which, you must remember, were in what was afterwards called Strathclyde.

I told you that the Roman emperors had built two large walls to keep out the Picts. The southern was Hadrian's Wall, right across the country from Carlisle to the Tyne. The Northern Wall had been built by Agricola and Antoninus. It stretched from the Forth to the Clyde. The district between these two walls

was given by Severus to the Scots, who came from the north of Ireland and they dwelt there.

A long time after this the land between the two walls was called Valentia, after the Emperor Valentinian, 368 A.D.

At the close of the fourth century, the Scots in Valentia were a very barbarous race. After a time they, together with the Picts, ruled over all North Britain, and called it Scotland ; but about 390 A.D. the Scots lived only in the southern part, between the two walls ; and they were great pirates and slave-holders.

Now these rough freebooters, of whom the Brythons lived in continual terror, were just the people who needed to be taught the peaceable doctrines of the Christian Faith ; and it was to these lawless Scots that St. Ninian went.

Have you ever heard of St. Martin, the soldier who divided his cloak with a beggar, and was afterwards Bishop of Tours in Gaul ?

You can read about him in Mrs. Ewing's tale, *The Story of a Short Life* ; which is a very beautiful story, with ever so much in it about St. Martin.

He was a great Christian teacher, and presided over a famous school at Tours.

Many missionaries learnt in that school how best to teach the Faith to poor, half-savage people like the Scots. But we must now think especially of our own British Ninian.

He went to the great school at Tours, where he studied hard and caught the spirit of those fine devoted souls who taught him. He also studied at Rome.

In due time he was consecrated bishop, and somewhere between 390 and 400 he went to Valentia, and settled there in the part which is now called Galloway. Here he began his mission.

It was very uphill work. But Ninian was full of zeal and love; and no man can give himself up to working for God and for His ignorant children, and find his work unblest. No sower casting seed abroad on a field in spring-time finds that field entirely bare at harvest-time, no matter how bad the season has been.

But we may well believe that Ninian had a weary time of it, which taxed his love and faith to the utmost. The people were so extremely barbarous, it seemed as if the beautiful teaching of Christ could never touch their hearts. But Ninian struggled on, with many prayers, through many dark days and anxious nights; and, at last, he built the people a beautiful church.

Now the early British churches were not much to boast of as buildings, as they were mostly of wattle, or, at the best, of wood and thatch; but this one that St. Ninian built was of fair white stone.

The Scots had never seen such a church before. Ninian dedicated it to God by the name of St. Martin, his own beloved teacher of Tours.

And because the church was white, the whole of the district in which it was built received the name of Whitherne, the White House.

The work of the good Ninian was "as bread cast upon the waters," to be found again "after many days."

Palladius and Kentigern were two of the missionaries who followed Ninian and carried on his work.

Palladius was sent by the Pope on a mission to Ireland.

But before they began their missions,—really even before Ninian began his,—the prosperity of Britain had begun to decline. We notice this especially after the death of Constantine the Great.

Rome had her own enemies nearer home, in the Goths and Vandals; and by degrees the legions were withdrawn from Britain to help to repel these invaders, who poured down upon them from the north, and required all their attention and all their strength.

Little by little the wealth of our island decreased, as one by one the Roman troops went away. At last, in 410 A.D., about one hundred years after the martyrdom of St. Alban, Britain was left to get on as it could.

The Church had held bravely on during this hundred years. Not advancing perhaps very much, but still keeping the Faith in its purity. A Church of no special note or strength, and not at this time remarkable for missionary zeal, or for famous men. A Church whose members were not always at peace one with another; but, still, we are quite sure it was very dear to God.

Then came the stirring of fresh life in the splendid missionary work of St. Ninian; and then, sad to say! the Church was

“in peril, sharp and sore,”

from the false teaching of one of her own priests.





ST. ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL

The name of this priest was Morgan, which means "the sea-born"; but he is best known to us by his Greek name Pelagius, and he spent much of his time at Rome. He was a Goidel from Wales.

Pelagius was a very good man, but he had some strange notions and beliefs, which would have done great harm to the whole Church of Christendom if unchecked.

His false teaching was brought into Britain by Agricola, one of his disciples, who had fled for refuge to Britain from Gaul because of his opinions, which the Gallican Church would not allow.

Some of the British bishops, being very much dismayed at the readiness with which many of the people received the false doctrine of Pelagius, sent to the Church in Gaul for help.

In response to their appeal, Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, came to Britain, 429 A.D.

They held a Synod, or Church Council, at Verulam (now St. Albans); and after strengthening their British friends and doing their best to dispel the false teaching, they stayed on through the winter.

Lent was the time when the clergy prepared the young people and converts for baptism at Easter. But they had many troubles in the Lent of 430 A.D.

The Saxons had already begun to trouble the Britons, and now they joined with the Picts and Scots, and came in great numbers from the north, so that the Southern Britons had no peace.

They could not tell, as they went along the roads, what fierce warriors might not be lying in ambush,

ready to spring out upon them at any moment. Villages were burnt and robberies committed, and at last it was quite time to take active measures to get rid of them.

But nothing was done till after the Holy tide, when those who had been under preparation were baptized into the Church of Christ.

But when Easter was over, Germanus and Lupus, being anxious to help their friends as much as possible, led the armies of the Southern Britons as far as what is now Flintshire, in the north of Wales.

Scouts were sent out; and as soon as they found that the Picts and Scots and Saxons were not far off, they returned, and the whole force of Southern Britons hid themselves in a wooded valley.

Presently the fierce foemen poured down the hills quite sure of victory; when all at once, we are told, at a signal from Germanus, there was a tremendous shout of Alleluia! from the whole body of Christians.

It was such a shout as the Picts and Scots and Saxons had never heard.

It sounded like thunder among the hills, and was echoed back again; and the shout went on and on and on, till the enemies of the Britons were so alarmed that they all turned and rushed back to the country of the Picts as fast as they could; and for a long time they did not trouble South Britain again.

Thus a great victory was gained and no blood was shed. We cannot wonder that the Britons thought more highly than ever of Germanus after this.

The place where this bloodless conquest is said

to have occurred is called "Maes Garmon" (the field of Germanus) unto this day.

This is the wonderful story of the Alleluia Victory.

With a rush and a swoop  
Down the hillsides came pouring  
The fierce, savage foemen,  
Their war-cry loud roaring :  
" Was there ever a Briton  
To beat us in fight?  
They shall surely be smitten—  
All smitten ere night ! "

But, hark ! like a thunder clap,  
Sounds Alleluia !  
And again like a thunder clap,  
Sounds Alleluia !  
The Britons are shouting,  
With one voice they shout ;  
Alleluia ! re-echo  
The hills round about.

Alleluia ! 'tis wondrous,  
This terrible sound ;  
It is grand, it is thund'rous  
All above, all around.  
Alleluia ! once more,  
And the foe take their flight ;  
Not a Briton was smitten  
That marvellous night.

But among the wild mountains  
Germanus upraises  
For the wonderful conquest  
Thanksgivings and praises.  
No blood had been shed,  
No warrior laid low  
In that marvellous victory  
Won long ago.  
Alleluia ! we praise Him,  
Our God in His might,  
Who triumphed so grandly  
That wonderful night.

## CHAPTER VI

### ST. PATRICK, THE APOSTLE OF IRELAND

I AM sorry to say that the doctrine of Pelagius again made way in Britain; and in 447 Germanus was appealed to a second time.

So he came, and held what we should call a mission; stirring up the faith of those who had grown careless, comforting the sad and oppressed, and strengthening those who were ready to falter in the right way.

He travelled far; and some say that he went to the Isle of Man and founded a bishopric there.

But one thing is certain—the remains of St. German's Cathedral may be seen there even now.

And all this while the Britons, left to themselves, without the government and wholesome rule of the Romans, grew weaker and weaker, and less able to resist the inroads of their enemies, the Picts and Scots from the north, and the barbarian invaders from the east.

But though, as a country, Britain was weak, there were some strong hearts in her Church; perhaps one of the strongest was that of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

No doubt you think St. Patrick was an Irishman.

No! He was a Brython, born, it is thought, at Kilpatrick, near Dumbarton, in what was afterwards called Strathclyde.

But I will soon tell you why the Irish claim him for their own especial saint.

His father was a deacon, and his grandfather a priest, of the Christian Church.

When Patrick was about sixteen he was taken prisoner by some of the rough pirates of Valentia, who had been so slow to receive the Gospel of Peace.

He was taken across the sea to the north of Ireland. There he was sold for a slave, and spent six years in tending cattle for the chief. This was about 403.

He escaped once, but was recaptured. However, after a while he was released, and sent home to his friends.

But his heart was full of love to those who had treated him so harshly when he was their slave, and he wished to convert them to the Christian Faith.

So he went to Gaul, to the school of St. Martin of Tours, and studied how best to teach the ignorant Irish to whom he had been in captivity.

In due time he was consecrated Bishop of the Irish, and was sent by the Pope to that country.

With twelve companions he landed on the western shore of Ireland in 432. The town of Wicklow now stands on the place. It is sacred ground.

Palladius, who, you remember, had been to Ireland, had in a measure prepared the way for him. But,

all the same, he had great difficulties to encounter, which by God's grace he overcame, and he did a splendid work there.

Once the powerful king of Tara sought his life, and St. Patrick stood before him and pleaded, not his cause alone, but that of his great Master, Christ.

You can imagine how thankful St. Patrick was when, at last, the king of Tara was baptized. The king was very grateful to him, and gave him a safe-conduct through Ireland.

It is very interesting to read about St. Patrick and his missionary work.

And it was work that grew. St. Patrick died in 463; and a very few years later, about 490, Ireland was so famous for its monasteries and schools that it was called the Land of Saints.

You know that the little green shamrock is the emblem of Ireland.

And why should this be so? There are many other plants in Ireland with beautiful flowers; now why did they choose the little humble shamrock?

I will tell you.

It is said that once, when St. Patrick was teaching the Irish about the Blessed Trinity, the Three Persons in One God, they asked, like Nicodemus of old, "How can these things be?"

St. Patrick then showed them the little shamrock: each tiny part of it a perfect leaf in itself, and yet needing all the three leaves together to make the one leaf a perfect whole. He told them it was a mystery; but the shamrock explained to them, better than his words could, the great truth of the Blessed Trinity.

We are told this is why the shamrock is the emblem of Ireland.

The Irish love St. Patrick, and I do not wonder. He was their forgiving apostle and devoted friend.

But while the work of the Church in Ireland was growing under St. Patrick's care, the condition of the British people, apart from their religion, was growing worse and worse.

You know that when the Roman legions were withdrawn, the Picts and other enemies were quick to take advantage of the unprotected condition of the Britons, and swooped down upon them in great numbers, so that the Britons besought aid from Rome.

But there were no soldiers to spare; for the barbarians were overrunning the north of Italy and Gaul, and doing their very best to conquer Rome itself, so that none of the Roman strength could be spared for the little island over which the great nation had ruled so long.

At last, in despair, the British king, Vortigern, knowing how strong was the race of men in the country on the opposite shores of the great North Sea, invited some of them from Jutland to come and help him.

Perhaps he thought that if they were invited to come, they would behave differently from what had been their custom when they came of their own accord.

At any rate, King Vortigern did ask them to come and help him to drive away the enemies of the Britons.

So the Jutes, under Hengist and Horsa, bearing the banner of a great white horse, landed in Thanet.

After a while, finding the country pleasant, they settled in East Kent. But Vortigern must have felt great disappointment.

They treated the Britons with great contempt, and laughed at their language, which they could not understand, and therefore they called it Welsh; this word meaning that it was unintelligible.

From calling the language Welsh they went on to give that name to all the Britons.

They slew many, and drove others away, and made slaves of some, so that the poor Britons were in evil case.

The Jutes, who came in 449, were followed by the Saxons, in 477. These settled in what we now call Essex, Middlesex, and Sussex.

Then in 495 came the tribes who settled in the south-west of Britain, called Wessex, or the land of the West Saxons.

Then, very much later, came the Angles in 547, who settled, some on the east coast, and some in the country between the Humber and the Firth of Forth.

You must remember where these tribes settled :—

The Jutes, in Kent and the Isle of Wight.

The first Saxons who came settled in Middlesex, Essex, and Sussex.

The later Saxons, in Wessex, which included Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset, Wilts, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire.

The Angles, in Norfolk, Suffolk, and part of Bedford, called East Anglia.

The other Angles, in Northumberland.

And the land of the Saxons, which took in the middle of the country, was called Mercia.

The whole of the southern part of Britain was at last called England, after these invaders, except those parts into which the native Britons were driven. These were Strathclyde, which, as you know, was the north-eastern part, from the Forth as far south as Wales; Wales itself; and West Wales, which last included Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset.

And you must remember that some of the exiled Britons went across the Channel to Gaul, and settled in Armorica, the north-west portion of it, which has been long called Brittany, because peopled by the Britons.

You must remember, too, that the Britons, Irish, and Scots are also called Celts; and their Church the Celtic Church.

The new masters of the country were fierce pagans, worshippers of Odin and Thor, whose names we still keep in our Wednesday and Thursday.

They loved fighting; and instead of thinking of heaven as we think of it, they thought their souls after death would go to a place called Walhalla, where they would always be feasting, and drinking wine and mead out of the skulls of their enemies they had killed in battle.

They hated the Christian religion with a very fierce hatred. They burnt down most of the churches, killed the priests, and indeed treated them more cruelly than I can possibly tell you.

Never think that the Britons gave up their beloved churches without a struggle to preserve them.

But their conquerors were very powerful warriors, against whom all their strivings were in vain.

There are only one or two churches which survived that troubled time: St. Martin's at Canterbury, St. Mary in the Castle at Dover, St. Piran's in Cornwall, preserved by the drifting sand; and at Silchester we can trace the foundation of one of the earliest of all, probably built a century before the time of St. Patrick.

Nor must we forget that fair island in Somerset, dear to every British heart. Round it has gathered poem and legend and many a sweet tradition, so that the truth about it is very hard to discover.

There was a monastery on it, founded we know not when, but we do know that from an early date it had its church and Christian teachers. This island was Glastonbury, the Glassy Isle.

At the time when the English forces came and spread themselves over the land, and so many Brythons had to take refuge in Wales, I think we can quite understand how they and the Goidels were fused into one race, the race we now call Welsh.

And now we shall soon read how, in that sad, dark time, God's grace, working through Celtic love and Celtic zeal, kept burning the light of truth; and how, in spite of nearly all England having become pagan, the Britons who remained and the Irish strengthened each other's hands in the cause of Christ.

Some people thought that the British Church

had quite died out under the English invasion; but this is very far from the truth.

Besides, how *could* it die, so long as its Head was our Lord Jesus Christ?

The fact that all through that terrible century and a half when the English were conquering the country and settling themselves in it, the banished Britons were steadily building up the faith of the people and settling districts to be governed by bishops, shows that the life of the Church was strong, and that it grew and prospered.

It was in the sixth century that the famous Welsh monasteries of Bangor-Iscoed, in North Wales, and Cærleon-on-Usk, in the south, were founded. They were famous schools of learning.

Of the Welsh bishoprics founded also at that time, four still remain: Bangor, St. Asaph's, St. David's, and Llandaff.

But it was a sad thing for it to be cut off from intercourse with the Gallican Church.

Intercourse with the bishops of Gaul had always been a great help to the Church in Britain; but it was now almost impossible, and the Celtic Church, both in Britain and Ireland, suffered in consequence.

Still, in spite of its being cut off from many helps, and growing a little old-fashioned in some of its ways, it kept up the true faith and worship, and did a marvellous work, as you will soon read.

And now we are coming to a story which I love: of one who, as a little boy, had the beautiful name given him of Columba, the Church Dove.

## CHAPTER VII

### ST. COLUMBA, THE APOSTLE OF THE NORTH

ABOUT fifty-six years after the death of the good St. Patrick there was born, among the wild mountains of the north of Ireland, a little boy, who was named Crimthan; but no one ever calls him by that name.

He belonged to a princely family of note in those far-off days.

Now this little boy was so religious and loved church so much, that he was called Columba, or Colm-kill, which means the Church Dove. It is a beautiful name.

When he was quite young he was sent to school at the monastery of Clonard, of which the abbot was St. Finnian, who had received his religious training from St. David at his monastery in South Wales.

I told you that the Irish and the British Churches strengthened each other.

Perhaps this was, in some measure, because the west of Britain, where the Christians mostly dwelt, was opposite to Ireland.

But I think the chief reason was, that in Ireland the people were of the same race as the Britons, so that there was sympathy between them. St. Finnian

was not the only Irishman who had been educated in Wales.

Columba was athirst for knowledge, and loved study; so that by the time he was grown up, he had learnt all that the good Abbot Finnian and his monks could teach; and when he was ordained priest he went about doing good, like the Master he served.

There was a school near Dublin, where he taught till the plague broke out, and the school had to be given up.

Then Columba returned to the north of Ireland, and founded a great many monasteries (which, you must remember, were all missionary stations); two of the most important of these were Durrow, now called Derry, and Kells.

He loved Christ with a deep and devoted love; but he had a fiery Celtic nature, quick to take offence and resent injustice; and, at that age, was certainly not as meek as the dove whose name he bore.

On one occasion a dispute arose about a Psalter, and the king of Tara, who was related to Columba, was asked to settle it.

Much to Columba's indignation, the king gave what seemed to Columba an unjust decision against him.

Stung by the verdict, Columba for a time forgot that "the servant of God must not strive"; and he stirred up a great rebellion, which ended in the loss of many lives.

When all the excitement was over, and he realised what he had done, his remorse was extreme. He prayed earnestly for forgiveness, and, with all his

heart, he wished he had borne the injustice, and not sacrificed those precious lives.

He would gladly have gone all his days in sack-cloth and ashes (if that would have done any good), if only he could have recalled the past.

But he did a better thing.

In great penitence and deep humility, he vowed before God that he would win as many souls to Christ as he had caused men to be slain in battle.

From this time he consecrated himself entirely to the service of Christ; and all the ardour of his warm, strong, loving nature was thrown into that service.

He put self on one side. He was not his own, but his Master's; and soon we shall read how his forgiving Master blessed his work.

With twelve companions Columba left Ireland in a coracle made of wicker-work, covered with the hides of oxen.

In this frail vessel they crossed the stormy sea till very near the shores of Scotland; and there they landed on a little island on Whitsun Eve, 563.

The little island was called I, or Hy; but the Latin name of it is Iona.

It is sometimes called I-colm-kill, which means Columba's isle, or the isle of the Church Dove.

Columba was careful to ask the owners of the island whether he might settle there; and, permission being granted, he and his monks at once set to work.

Adamnan, who was an abbot of Iona more than a century later, wrote a history of Columba and his work; and we learn from it what his monastery was like.

He says it was only a few rude buildings of wattle ; which, as you know, consists of osiers twisted in and out of posts—just like hurdles ; and then the whole was plastered over with mud.

Besides the chapel there was a dwelling for the abbot and his brethren, another for strangers, an eating-room, and a kitchen—all arranged round a green court.

This group of cloister buildings was enclosed by a rampart, and outside this was a byre for cows, a barn and storehouse for grain, and other outbuildings.

The occupations of the day were devotion, reading and writing, and manual labour. The devotions consisted of daily Morning and Evening Prayer. For manual labour, they ploughed, sowed, reaped, milked the cows, made cheese, and fished.

Adamnan tells us much more.

The monks of Iona were skilful writers and illuminators of books ; for the Irish had invented a style of art and formed a famous school of writing.

Some of the books written by Columba himself still remain : The Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow. They are very fine examples of the clear, bold writing and beautiful ornamentation of the Irish School.

All this we learn from the account written by Adamnan ; so that we can really picture life in Iona more than fourteen hundred years ago.

He speaks of “the fishful rivers” ; so no doubt the principal food of the monastery was found in them.

Columba was a remarkable man in every way. He was, like some of the Scots in our own day,

gifted with second sight, which made him know sometimes what was happening a very long way off, when no one else could see it.

He was, too, so full of sympathy, and read character so well, that he could often foresee the probable life of any one about whom he thought much. He was also goodly to look upon—tall and strong, with a bright, happy face.

He dwelt at Iona thirty-four years; but from that little island he not only went back, from time to time, to see how his monasteries were getting on in Ireland, but he made journeys throughout Scotland from sea to sea.

He took some of his disciples with him; and when he had found a suitable place, he taught, baptized converts, built osier churches, and everywhere he left some of his monks to carry on the work.

He was very brave, and with his faithful followers went about all the rough northern seas among the Hebrides, where the narrow channels are full of dangers from jutting rocks and treacherous currents, so that we wonder how their light coracles could bear them in safety.

Far away to the distant Orkneys and Shetland Isles he bore the light of truth; and God respected his vow, and gave him unnumbered souls for Christ.

The years went on, but the love and faith of St. Columba only burnt brightly and more brightly. There was no monastery in the north like Iona, nor were there ever more devoted missionaries.

After their great founder's death they went forth, full of love and zeal, across Scotland, beyond the



IONA CATHEDRAL



great North Sea, and taught the Germans. They went southwards and helped the Church in Northern France; and it is impossible to say what a force Iona was in the conversion and building up of Northumbria, as you will read by and by; nor how the Church spread its arms far and wide from its centre in that lone northern isle.

Well may Columba, our good St. Columba, be called the Apostle of the North.

And all the while he taught and preached in the north of Britain, all England was under pagan rule. Only the steadfast British Christians, mostly in Strathclyde, Wales, and West Wales, kept the Faith alive, waiting and hoping for some brighter day when all the land would be in subjection to Christ.

There are many beautiful stories of Columba.

Do you know the lines—

“He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small,  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and cares for all.”

This was quite true of St. Columba.

Once on his lonely island, against whose shores the waves beat restlessly, he saw far, far off in the south-west a mere speck in the sky—a crane flying over from Ireland.

We read that he bade one of the monks watch by the shore till the crane arrived; and told him to receive it tenderly and feed and care for it. “It comes,” he said, “from our own fatherland.”

So when the poor weary crane, exhausted with its long flight, buffeted by the winds, faint and almost

breathless, fell at last, quite spent, on the beach, there was one of the good Iona brethren waiting ready to help and revive it.

He praised God continually for the glory of the sunrise and the sunset, the beauty of the sky, the sunshine and the stars. He heard the voice of his Maker in the thunder of the waves as well as in the song of the birds; and "beauty born of murmuring sound" in all the inland streams and "fishful rivers" so touched his devoted heart that it broke forth in glorious hymns of praise.

It is impossible to say how full his heart was of love, not for the untaught only, but for all lives that had ever touched his, especially for those under his care.

We are told that on a bitter winter's day the good abbot was found in tears; and when the brethren asked him the cause of his grief, he said, "it was not strange he should be distressed, for he saw his beloved monks, toiling far off in Durrow, in evil case."

But his pitying prayers for his brethren were quickly answered; and even as he prayed and wept, their burdens were lifted, and their cruel taskmasters set them free.

His loving prayers stretched farther still, embracing all unknown souls whom he hoped to draw to Christ.

Those were prayers of which the poet says:

"For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the Feet of God."

And now we have followed our Church Dove from his earnest childhood to the stormy incident of his early manhood and his deep repentance.

We have watched him through his life of stern self-denial, of absolute self-surrender to Christ, and now we must think of his beautiful death.

For we must all die, and render up the account to God of how we have spent our life; and so the summons came to St. Columba on a fair Sunday morning in the June of 597.

We are told by Adamnan, that on the day before, with his dutiful attendant Diormit, he went to bless the granary, which was close at hand.

On entering it he blessed both it and two heaps of corn which were stored therein; and told his monks how glad he was that they had a year's food in store.

On his way home he rested a little while by the roadside; and his faithful white horse came up, and putting his head close to him, as if he knew they must soon part, the animal shed tears in the saint's lap, whereupon Columba blessed him, and turned away.

Then he climbed the little hill that overlooked the monastery; and standing, with both hands uplifted, he blessed it, and foretold how kings of strange and foreign nations, with their people, should bring it great honour, and saints of other Churches show it no common reverence.

Then he returned to his own poor cell, and continued a work of his early days, a transcription of the Psalter, till he paused at the words: "*They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*" (Ps. xxxiv. 10).

The evening service then followed. After this he

went to rest, with a bare rock (as Adamnan says) for straw, and a stone for his pillow. So resting, he gave his parting counsel.

"These, my little children," he said, "are my last words. I charge you to keep unfeigned love one with another. If you do so after the pattern of the Fathers, God, the Champion of the good, will help you." . . .

At midnight the bell sounded for matins. Columba sprang up, and entering the church before any of the brethren, fell on his knees before the altar.

A faithful attendant followed, and saw from afar the whole church flooded with angelic light.

When he came to the door the light vanished ; but groping his way through the darkness, he found the saint, and lifted up his head and placed it in his bosom.

By this time the brethren had come in with lights, and burst into lamentation at the sight of their dying master.

Columba opened his eyes and looked round with an expression of marvellous gladness, for (his biographer adds) he saw the angel who had come to meet him ; and, responding to the action of his friend, he feebly raised his hand that he might give by sign the benediction which he could not pronounce with his failing breath !

And so, like his Lord, he passed away in blessing.

There is very much more to learn about far-famed, saintly Iona ; and one thing I must tell you. It was held in such repute for sanctity that the kings of Scotland went to Iona to be crowned.

Have you seen in Westminster Abbey the chair used for the coronation of our kings and queens?

If you have, perhaps you have been told that a stone which forms part of this chair is the very stone on which the Scottish kings sat when they were crowned on I-colm-kill, hundreds of years ago.

Then, too, it became the burial-place of sixty northern kings.

There, on the southern side of the abbey, they lie among abbots and monks and many a lord of the isles,—these kings of olden days, who deemed Iona truly a hallowed spot wherein to rest.

Forty-eight Scottish monarchs, four from Ireland, and eight from Norway, sleep there their last, long sleep. For Columba rests there too; and for his sake—for the sake of our Church Dove—Iona was, and is, and ever shall be, an island of the blessed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GREGORY THE GREAT, AND THE MISSIONARIES FROM ROME, UNDER ST. AUGUSTINE

YOU remember the last words St. Columba wrote in his Psalter : " They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

I am now going to show you how true that was, and how the prayers that we may be sure Columba and all the Celtic Church offered for the conversion of England were answered.

And you must bear in mind that even in pagan England we have reason to believe there were a few scattered and scanty congregations ; and though we are not sure, still there is some warrant for our belief that as late as 580 there was a Bishop of London.

Some years before Columba's death there was in Rome a certain man of high rank named Gregory, who was a Prætor in the Senate, and therefore occupied an important post.

But Gregory, who was a very religious man, gave up all his worldly prospects and became a monk. He founded several monasteries ; but the one of which we know the most, and to which the English owe a very great debt, was that dedicated to St. Andrew on the Cœlian Hill.

It is not certain whether it was when Prætor or after he became Abbot of St. Andrew's—it certainly was before he became Bishop, or Pope, of Rome—that he saw one day in the market-place, exposed for sale as slaves, some English boys from Northumbria.

Gregory looked at them with much pity. They had beautiful fair hair and complexions, and large blue eyes; and the good man's heart was full of sorrow at the thought of such noble-looking boys becoming slaves, and subject to all sorts of ill-treatment.

No doubt you know the story. It is one that every English child should know. But it will do no harm to tell it again.

Struck with the sad condition of these bright-haired boys, Gregory asked from whence they came?

And when told they were Angles from Northumbria in Britain, he said: "They would not be Angles, but angels, if they were but Christians."

And then he made up his mind that some one should be sent to teach the Angles in Britain the Faith of Christ.

His great wish was to be himself the missionary to the country of these Anglian boys. And when he thought a fitting time had come, he set out for England.

But Gregory was far too valuable a man for Rome to spare so easily; and he was sent for, and thus was obliged to return.

Still he did not forget the land of the Angles, which he knew was to the north of England. He made many plans; and at last, when he was conse-

crated Bishop of Rome, he put the longing of years into effect.

It had been a trial to him not to go himself, but he felt that the next best thing was to send missionaries from his own beloved monastery of St. Andrew on the Cœlian Hill.

We are quite sure that, long before this, he had talked over his great wish with the monks, and had tried to create in them the same interest in the people in the land of the Angles that he felt himself.

If he did not wholly succeed, yet he was so far successful that at last, in the autumn of 596, he sent forth his first band of missionaries from St. Andrew's monastery, under the guidance of the Prior Augustine—a man of zeal, who was intended by Pope Gregory to be made Bishop of the English.

As he blessed them and sent them on their mission, we may be sure he prayed earnestly that they might indeed be blessed; and gave hearty thanks to God, who had thus granted his heart's desire.

They went by way of Gaul.

But before I tell you what befell them, you must know that Gaul had been, like Britain, overrun by foreign invaders.

The chief of these, who in the sixth century had possession of nearly the whole land, were the Franks, who had given to the conquered country the name of France. The people were at that time called Franks, not French.

It is important to remember this conquest. But the country was still Gaul, even as Britain was still Britain though conquered by the English.

And now we will return to Augustine and his band of missionaries.

They went by way of Gaul. But they had gone but a little distance when they were very much discouraged by hearing dreadful reports of the savage conduct and manners and speech of the English people. This, together with the cold and fatigue, so affected the missionaries that Augustine, leaving them in Gaul, went back to Rome to ask Gregory what he should do. But from Pope Gregory there could be but one answer, and that was, "they must go forward."

Do you quite understand what "going forward" meant to Augustine and his companions?

I will tell you.

In those far-off days, when there were no carriages or coaches, trains, or bicycles, or motor-cars, it meant walking all through Gaul from south to north, about six hundred and fifty miles.

A long and tedious journey to take on foot; sometimes under a hot sun, sometimes drenched with rain, or delayed by storms. Not seldom, during the winter, plodding through the snow, or perhaps having to wade through streams which were often too swollen by the autumn rains to be quite safe to cross.

If they could have looked forward to a kind welcome at the end of their journey, their hearts would have been warmed by hope. But, as I have told you, they had had on entering Gaul the greatest discouragement thrown on their undertaking.

Was Gregory unkind in bidding them "go forward"?

Far from it. He knew that they ought to "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ"; and that those who serve Him must not think of their own comfort; nay, rather they must be willing to give up their very lives for the sake of Christ, and for the good of those whom He died to save.

You remember the words of St. Paul—

"I count not my life dear unto myself."

The good Gregory was not insensible to the difficulties in the way, but he did his best to help Augustine and his forty companions to meet and overcome them.

Therefore, in order to give Augustine more authority over his little band, he made him abbot. Before this he was only one of the brethren. Now he was chief, and the rest were bound to obey him, instead of arguing about whether they could or could not go on.

Then Pope Gregory furnished him with letters of introduction to the Frankish kings and bishops; and having done this, he once more dismissed Augustine to his work.

Strengthened by the words of counsel and good cheer from the bishop to whom they owed obedience, the missionaries (among whom were several Frankish interpreters) went on their way under their leader.

They wintered in Gaul, and then steadfastly set their faces northwards, towards a colder climate than that of their own beloved Rome; a land where they had heard that mists abounded, and the sun had little power compared with the warmth of their native land,





ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY

But their hearts were stronger now, and they plodded on. Augustine's journey to Rome and back, with other delays at a time when travelling at the best was slow, had greatly hindered their progress. But in due time the little band of missionaries set foot on the shores of England.

It was in the spring of the year 597 that Augustine and his company landed in the Isle of Thanet in Kent.

The exact spot is not known, but it was probably at Ebbsfleet, where the Jutes, under Hengist and Horsa, had landed more than a hundred years before, in 449.

What a different landing was this from that of the fierce pagan warriors. Then the object was war; now the mission was one of peace.

Soon Augustine sought an audience of Ethelbert, who was not only king of Kent, but Bretwalda; that is, chief among all the English kings.

Now Ethelbert had married Bertha, a Frankish princess, and a Christian. She had her own chaplain, Luidhard, and they had their own Christian services in the little church of St. Martin, just outside Canterbury.

It is supposed that this church, which is one of the most interesting in England, was once a British church, then a pagan temple: we may see the Roman bricks in its walls even now. It was at the time of Augustine a Christian church again.

Now the Saxon religion, like all heathen religions, was full of superstitions; and for fear these Roman Christians should weave some spells around the royal

group, King Ethelbert received them in the open air.

It was an imposing procession which came slowly on towards the oak under which the king and queen were sitting, surrounded by their courtiers.

At the head of the procession came one who held aloft a silver cross.

Immediately afterwards there rose the tall, stately figure of Augustine; then followed all the priests and monks, one of whom bore, so that all might see it, a banner or board, on which was painted the figure of our Blessed Lord.

On they came, slowly and solemnly, chanting psalms, whose music, which we still use in some of our churches, and which had been taught them by Gregory himself, was in its grand simplicity very beautiful to hear.

Then the procession stopped before the king and queen.

Ethelbert could see they were much in earnest as to their religion, and he rightly judged them to be good men.

It does not appear that Queen Bertha and her chaplain Luidhard had tried to convert Ethelbert. Indeed, Pope Gregory afterwards reproved the queen for her negligence in this matter. But, no doubt, the influence of her good life had told upon her husband. Certain it is that he listened with respect to Augustine's words.

Of course Ethelbert could not, all at once, embrace the views of the Roman abbot. But he gave him permission to settle with his monks in a house in his

own royal city of Canterbury, with leave to teach the doctrines of the Church.

And after their long journey and all their fears, Augustine and his little band of followers must have heartily thanked God for the kind welcome which King Ethelbert gave them; for they had certainly been well received.

## CHAPTER IX

### ST. AUGUSTINE AT CANTERBURY

I WONDER if you know Canterbury? It is one of the most interesting places in England. Whenever I am there I forget how old the world is, and go back to the far-off days in the spring of 597, when the Roman missionaries entered the royal city.

I see the grave procession now,  
Augustine, stern of mien,  
Honorius, sweet-voiced and young,  
Full of high hopes, I ween ;  
What time in solemn tones and full  
His chant to heaven he raises,  
And the full choir, with one accord,  
Unite in prayers and praises.

The very streets are echoing still  
With footsteps sandal-shod,  
The very air is musical  
With hymns sent up to God ;  
We tread the self-same way they trod,  
Like sunshine wraps us round,  
We needs must speak in voices hushed,  
For sure 'tis holy ground.

Ethelbert allowed Augustine and the other missionaries to worship in St. Martin's Church ; and Augustine taught and prayed and reasoned with the king and people so successfully, that on Whitsun Eve,

the 1st of June 597, the same year in which the little band came to England, Ethelbert and his court were baptized.

And afterwards the king gave permission to Augustine to preach anywhere he liked in the kingdom of Kent.

We must remember that this baptism of the great Bretwalda took place just one week after the death of our good St. Columba. Thus were his prayers answered, for so was fulfilled the promise—

“They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Truly God never leaves Himself without a witness ; for while yet the Apostle of the North lingered at the Gates of Paradise, Augustine, the Apostle of the South, was converting the people of Kent.

Ethelbert was a very good friend to the missionaries, and soon gave them land on which to build. He even gave up his own palace for their use, and retired to Reculver. Above all, he encouraged them by his own good example.

And now Augustine saw the need of being made a bishop, in order to be able not only to rule the Church, but to ordain others.

So, leaving his monks to go on with the work of converting the people of Kent, he crossed over to Gaul, and was consecrated Bishop of the English by the Bishop of Arles.

This was the beginning of the Church of England.

By the time Augustine returned, he found the missionaries had done so very much to convert the people, that on Christmas Day ten thousand persons were baptized in the Swale, near Sheppey.

I should like you to remember the chief events of that wonderful year 597.

First of all, in the spring, Augustine and his missionary band, after their long journey, landed in Thanet, and had audience of King Ethelbert.

Second, St. Columba entered into rest after his long missionary labours, full of faith in the Master he had served so well.

Third, there was the baptism of King Ethelbert on Whitsun Eve, the 1st of June, eight days after the death of St. Columba.

Fourth, Augustine was consecrated Bishop of the English; and thus our Church of England was begun.

Fifth, on Christmas Day ten thousand converts to the Christian Faith were baptized.

And now it is delightful to think how the British churches, some in ruins or profaned by the false pagan worship, were restored to the Christians.

There was one, quite in ruins, near to the house which Ethelbert had given to the missionaries for a dwelling-place.

This ruined church was given to St. Augustine, and he soon had it repaired. When finished, it was dedicated to the Holy Saviour.

If ever you go to Canterbury you must think of this. For the beautiful cathedral of Christ Church stands on the very site of this old British church, and within it, to this day, may be seen St. Augustine's chair.

Then, bearing in mind the comfort of his monks and the necessity of a lasting house where they could

live together under his rule as abbot, Augustine—of course with the assistance of the king—founded outside the city walls a monastery, which was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. He wished that he might be buried there when his time came to lay down his work. He could not know that, long afterwards, in remembrance of his mission, that monastery would be called after his own name, the Abbey of St. Augustine.

There is now on its very site the Missionary College of St. Augustine, and from it the light of the Christian Faith goes forth to all lands, carrying on the blessed work which its founder began.

Then just beyond this abbey was another building, not in ruins, because Ethelbert had only just given up the worship in it of his false gods.

Now he gave it to St. Augustine, who, after cleansing it, consecrated it as a Christian church and dedicated it to the glory of God in the name of the boy-martyr St. Pancras.

Augustine loved devotedly his own monastery on the Coelian Hill at Rome. The land on which it stood had formerly belonged to the family of which St. Pancras was a member. So we can see why he chose him as its patron saint.

The first bishop of the English is often considered a hard, stern man, but he was a man of warm affections, as this dedication clearly shows.

But Augustine had a good deal to do beyond repairing and building churches. He went about unceasingly on his mission, and had great success; so that he was very thankful indeed.

And now he wrote to Gregory by the hands of Laurentius and Peter, a priest and a monk, reporting the progress of the mission; and asking advice as to many subjects connected with it, and especially as to how to treat the British bishops.

In reply, the good Pope Gregory sent to help Augustine (as we are told by Bede) "several fellow-labourers and ministers of the Word; of whom the first and principal were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and Rufinianus; and by them all things in general that were necessary for the worship and service of the Church." He also sent Augustine a narrow white woollen scarf or vestment, called a "pall." This was a great mark of distinction, and an emblem of the power entrusted to him as archbishop.

Pope Gregory wrote a long letter to Augustine, answering all his questions. He gave him full authority over the British bishops.

Now, if Gregory, who was so wise and judicious as well as kind, had known a little more about the Celtic Church in Britain, which had held on to the Faith in times of terrible storm and stress, and had proved itself a missionary Church, had learned men in its monasteries, and many zealous, devoted souls among its members,—he would, I think, scarcely have given this absolute power to Augustine, although he was now Archbishop of Canterbury.

Certainly, when the English had conquered Britain the Church had been, as you know, driven westward into Strathclyde, Wales, and Cornwall, and was thus cut off from intercourse with other churches on the mainland.

This was probably why Gregory knew very little about it. Still, as he knew there *was* a Church, it seems a pity he should have given Augustine such complete authority before finding out whether or not the Church in Britain was (as it really was), equally with that of Rome, a true part of the Holy Catholic Church.

Augustine, as working under Gregory, was of course bound to obey him; but the result was not a happy one; in fact, very much the reverse.

However, Augustine was convinced that it would be right to see the British bishops, so he wrote to ask that they would come and confer with him.

But the Anglo-Saxons, who now possessed the land, had treated the Britons so very cruelly that the bishops refused to come unless some security was given for their safety.

Some people think that the British Christians ought to have converted the Anglo-Saxons (or English).

But how could a conquered race have any power at all with those to whom they were in subjection? When the English race, centuries after, colonised North America, would they have listened to the Red Indians if they had tried to convert them to their faith?

I think not.

We must remember that the Britons had been accustomed to be treated by their rude conquerors with scorn and contempt. It would have been quite useless to try to convert them; and perhaps because the Anglo-Saxons (or English, by which I mean

the whole race) knew they had been from the first very cruel to the people who had begged for help in a sad time of need, they hated the Britons, for the oppressor always hates the oppressed.

But now King Ethelbert, as Bretwalda, arranged among the other kings for the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold a conference with the British bishops.

It was somewhere on the edge of the West Saxon country, though no one can tell the exact place, that he met the bishops under a spreading oak ; and their conference began.

But the account of it I must give you in another chapter.



**ENGLAND**  
at the time of  
THE HEPTARCHY.



## CHAPTER X

### ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE BRITISH BISHOPS

I WANT you to remember that Rome had long been the mistress of the world. The kings and emperors of Rome had always been what boys call "masterful"; and now that the power of Rome as an empire was declining, this domineering spirit was apt to show itself in those who held power in the Church.

Not that we see much of it in Gregory, who is justly termed "the Great," for he was one of the humblest and saintliest of men: "the servant of servants" he styled himself when writing to Augustine. The mistake he made was greatly the result of ignorance.

Augustine's nature was of a narrower kind than Gregory's.

He was so perfectly certain that whatever the Church of Rome did was right, that he could not believe any other Church could be right which did not, in all things, do as the Church of Rome.

He thought that the British Church, being in such an out-of-the-way island, and in the most distant part of it, *must* be in need of teaching from an enlightened place like Rome.

But even if it had needed the teaching, it would have been right to give it with gentleness and consideration.

Now Augustine, during the two years of the absence of Laurentius and Peter, had had ample time and opportunity to find out about the British Church. He did not wish to put it right on matters of doctrine, which means the *teaching* of the Faith, because he was now convinced that the Britons held it in its purity; but it was more on points of ritual, which means the *rule* of what belonged to religion, that he wished them to agree with him.

For example: the British Church did not keep Easter at the same time as the Roman Church did. There was the difference of a few days, as there is even now between the Easter of the Greek Church and ours. That was one point.

Another was, that in the consecration of bishops the Roman Church said it was necessary for the ceremony to be performed by two bishops, while the British Church considered that one was sufficient.

There was also a little difference in the way the Sacrament of Baptism was administered.

Then, too, the Roman monks and clergymen shaved their heads in a way which left the crown bare, with a fringe of hair round; while the British clergy shaved theirs in the form of a crescent.

Augustine had also wished to alter the liturgy of Britain, which was the same as that of Gaul, but different from that of Rome.

However, Pope Gregory had told him there was no harm in this. The wisest thing would be to take

from each liturgy whatever he thought most suitable, and make thus a new liturgy for the English Church.

These were the chief points of difference which Augustine wished to do away with. He did not sufficiently consider that it was because of their cruel conquerors that the British Christians had been cut off from communion with the Gallican and other parts of the Catholic Church, and was therefore a little behind the times as to some practices. Nor did he respect enough the steadfastness of the British Church: without help from others, but made strong by the Holy Spirit, holding on fast to the Faith when all was dark around.

Perhaps he could not realise what a noble fight they had fought; for, with all his goodness and zeal, he was narrow in the view he took of others who did not think quite as he did; and certainly he felt quite sure that he was right and the British bishops wrong.

So you will quite understand that when he met the bishops at the oak, which was the place of appointment, he was not at all inclined to yield to them in any single thing. They were equally unwilling to give up, at the bidding of a stranger, their long established customs, without due consideration and being quite sure that it was right to give them up.

Then Augustine asked them if they would not join with him in trying to convert the Anglo-Saxons?

But the Britons, remembering all that their ancestors had suffered at the hands of their con-

querors, could not, all at once, decide whether they could do this.

They said they should like time for full consideration of all the subjects that had been brought forward, and it was decided that another conference should be held later on.

Before this second conference took place the British bishops consulted a holy man, a hermit, whether or not they ought to alter the customs dear to them because Augustine required it?

"He answered," so we are told by Bede, our great Church historian, "If he is a man of God, follow him."

"How shall we know that?" said they.

He replied: "Our Lord saith, 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart'; if, therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ, and offers the same to you to take upon you. But if he is stern and haughty, it appears that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his words."

They insisted again: "And how shall we discern even this?"

"Do you contrive," said the anchorite (or hermit) "that he may first arrive with his company at the place where the synod is to be held; and if at your approach he shall rise up to you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is the servant of Christ; but if he shall despise you, and not rise up to you, whereas you are more in number, let him also be despised by you."

So, with this counsel in their minds, the British bishops, seven in number, with a great many learned men from the famous monastery of Bangor-Iscoed, on the river Dee, went to the place of meeting.

You will sometimes hear these bishops spoken of as Welsh, which you remember was the name the Saxons gave to the conquered race.

They went to the place of meeting. And there sat Augustine with his monks. And, sad to say! he sat quite still, and never rose to greet the large company of holy and learned men, with the seven British bishops at their head! I am very sorry to have to tell you this, but it is a fact. We are told to be courteous and reverent, for true courtesy or politeness has its root in humility and consideration for others.

The British bishops felt that their question was decided for them, as Augustine was evidently not "meek and lowly in heart."

"For," said one of them, "if he would not rise up to us just now, how much more will he despise us if we begin to be subject to him?"

They all refused to yield a single point. And the conference broke up with a feeling of anger on the part of Augustine, and great soreness of heart on the part of the British bishops. They had been treated with contempt, and it was hard to bear.

Augustine lost much valuable help by his incivility; and the whole Church in Britain suffered for it through many, many years.

It was a grand opportunity wasted through the indulgence of a haughty spirit. As I have said

before, he was bound to obey Pope Gregory, but he might perhaps have won over the British Church had his manner been humble and pleasant.

But we must not be too hard on him. He returned to Kent feeling mortified and out of heart, and the failure was not less hard to bear because it was his own fault.

He still tried his best to extend his missionary work in Essex, which included what we now call Middlesex. Sabert was king of Essex at that time.

London was the capital of Essex; and Augustine having restored its see, made Mellitus its bishop. He also consecrated Justus Bishop of Rochester.

Devoted to Rome as he naturally was, who can wonder that he dedicated the cathedral of Rochester to St. Andrew, the patron saint of his own dear monastery on the Cœlian Hill.

Ethelbert was a noble friend to all the Roman missionaries. He spared no expense in helping to spread the Faith of the Gospel, and in repairing old churches and building new ones for the devout worship of God.

But St. Augustine's health had begun to fail. He had worked very hard, and, in spite of all the help given him by the king, he had found the rough people of the country very difficult to deal with. Accustomed also to the soft, warm climate of Italy, the fogs and varying temperature of our island had told upon him, as indeed was the case with most of the Roman missionaries.

None of them, with the exception of Honorius and James the deacon—of whom you will hear later,—lived

to be old. And if sometimes we are inclined to think some of them lost heart easily, we must remember that our climate was as trying to them as the climate of some parts of Asia and Africa is to the missionaries of our own time.

Augustine did a great work. Besides converting Kent and Essex, he once more opened up communication for Britain with the Christian lands beyond ; and his work remains unto this day.

St. Augustine consecrated Laurentius Archbishop of Canterbury ; and soon afterwards died. He was buried first in a cemetery just outside the city ; but when his beautiful abbey was completed, Ethelbert caused it to be the last resting-place of the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

The old abbey is gone ; but you remember that part of the present Missionary College of St. Augustine stands on its site. When you go to Canterbury and see its magnificent abbey gateway (which is of much later date than the one King Ethelbert built), I am sure you will not forget St. Augustine and his great and zealous work, and that he gave up his life in his mission to the English.

He died in 604.

I am sure St. Gregory must have been a man of great faith ; for in spite of his intense longing for the conversion of the Angles, neither he nor Augustine lived to see it. But others from the Coelian Hill went to Northumbria at last, as you will read in due time.

For all good works require patience ; and missionary work most of all.

## CHAPTER XI

### ST. PAULINUS AND KING EDWIN

**A**FTER the death of Pope Gregory the Great, which in about two months was followed by that of Augustine, there was a time of trouble in the English Church.

First of all, Laurentius, the new archbishop, wrote letters to the British bishops and to those in Ireland, trying to induce them to think on all points as the English Church, following the use of the Church of Rome. He was particularly anxious that they should all keep Easter at the same time.

But the efforts of Laurentius were in vain. The British and Irish Churches held aloof from the Church which had the Archbishop of Canterbury for its head; and I am sorry to say that for a very long time the Celtic Christians would have nothing to do with the English.

They had felt slighted by Augustine, and had been accustomed to look with horror on their savage conquerors and their descendants. They had their grievances, we can well understand, but, all the same, we must regret the way they received the overtures of the new archbishop.

Time went on, and in 616 the English Church

lost the good King Ethelbert ; and Sabert, king of Essex, also died.

Eadbald, the son of Ethelbert, threw off his Christian faith, and so did the three sons of Sabert.

You can understand how bad it was for the Church in Kent and Essex to have pagan kings again.

At last, the three sons of Sabert were so very angry with Mellitus, Bishop of London, because he refused to give them the Holy Communion when they were, as yet, unbaptized, that they banished him from the kingdom, the little kingdom of Essex ; and he went into Kent to consult with Laurentius, the archbishop, and Justus, Bishop of Rochester.

A sort of panic seemed to possess them all, and Mellitus and Justus went to France, to wait till "this tyranny" should be "overpast."

Laurentius was also preparing to go ; but he was stopped in a wonderful way.

He was very much distressed at the state of affairs in Essex and Kent, and no doubt his conscience made him uneasy ; for no matter how difficult the work of the bishops was, they ought to have stayed at their posts unless sent away.

The evening before the day he had fixed to leave England he had his bed taken into the Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, thinking perhaps he might never see the beloved church again. After many prayers and tears he slept.

Now, quite in the dead of the night, the Apostle Peter appeared to him, and after scourging him severely, asked him why he was going to forsake the flock committed to him ?

Naturally, we should think this was a dream. The next morning Laurentius went to King Eadbald, and showed him the scars of the stripes wherewith St. Peter had chastised him.

We cannot explain how this was ; but dreams are strange things ; and the sorrowful archbishop may have flogged himself in the night, thinking all the while it was St. Peter.

Anyhow, this is what we are told by Bede.

Now King Eadbald was very much impressed when he saw the scars. He at once gave up his idol-worship, and was baptized.

He was really in earnest, and continued all his life constant to the Faith. He sent to France for Mellitus and Justus, and restored the Bishop of Rochester to his see.

But London, given up to idolatry, would not have Mellitus back ; for forty years it had no bishop, and in Essex it quite seemed that Christianity had nearly died out.

But during this sad time a splendid work was begun in Northumbria.

Now take your map and notice carefully the position of Northumbria.

It was half the land north of the Humber. Side by side with it were Cumberland and Strathclyde.

It went up as far as the Forth. You remember Edinburgh was so called because it was the town and fortress of King Edwin, who reigned over Northumbria in 625.

Now we must go back a few years.

A very cruel king of Northumbria, named

Ethelfrid, had driven into exile the rightful Prince Edwin, and had taken his kingdom from him.

After many, many months of weary wanderings in various parts of England, Edwin at last took refuge with Redwald, king of the East Angles, who had his court at Dunwich on the coast.

Here he remained for some time. At last he was told that Redwald meant either to kill him or to deliver him into the hands of his enemy.

It was sad enough to be an exile, but it was far worse to be told that Redwald, who had promised to be his friend, was false to his trust, and meant to betray him or put him to death.

Faithlessness in a friend is terrible to bear; and after hearing this news, even the brave heart of Edwin sank within him.

He was sitting outside the palace in the still night, lost in thoughts darker far than the night itself, when suddenly there appeared before him a stranger, who gravely asked him why he sat there instead of resting within the palace?

The stranger's voice was kind, though his mien was grave; and Edwin told him all his grief.

Then the stranger asked him if his life were spared and his kingdom given back to him, what return he would make to his deliverer?

Edwin answered, "that he would give that person all that he was able for so singular a favour."

Then he asked the prince what he would do if he not only overcame his enemies, but afterwards surpassed in power all that had reigned over the English nation?

Edwin readily promised to make "a suitable return to him who would so highly oblige him."

Then said the stranger, "But if he who foretells so much good as is to befall you can also give you better advice for your life and salvation than any of your kindred ever heard of, do you consent to submit to him, and to follow his wholesome counsel?"

Edwin promised "that he would in all things follow the directions of that man who should deliver him from so many calamities, and raise him to a throne."

Upon this the stranger laid his hand upon Edwin's head and said, "When this sign shall be given you, remember this present discourse, and do not delay the performance of what you now promise."

Then the stranger departed; and while Edwin was still wondering what it might all mean, the same friend who had warned him of his danger came to him and bade him be of good cheer; for the King Redwald had repented him of his cruel design, and, instead of killing Edwin, he meant to help him with a large force of soldiers to fight against Ethelfrid.

Ethelfrid had some years before been guilty of massacring a great number of monks from Bangor-Iscoed. He feared their prayers; because, though they did not bear arms, they went to pray for the success of the Britons in a battle against Ethelfrid.

Soon after this he destroyed the monastery of Bangor-Iscoed. It was a terrible calamity to befall the British Church. No wonder Edwin felt that he had in Ethelfrid a very powerful and deadly foe.

But, I am glad to say, Redwald kept his word;

and in a great battle fought near Retford, in what is now Nottinghamshire, Ethelfrid was slain, and so Edwin recovered his kingdom.

And now, in 625, when he was happily ruling over his own Northumbria and was Bretwalda as well, he sent ambassadors to the court of Kent, and asked Eadbald the king to give him his sister Ethelburga for his wife.

But Eadbald said, "No; he could not do that. It was not right for a Christian maiden to marry a pagan."

This message was taken back to Edwin.

It would take some days to convey a message from Kent to Northumbria. There were no post offices, no telegrams; every letter or message had to be taken many miles by trusty messengers, who went by land sometimes, at others, when more convenient, by sea.

Edwin received the message in due course; and in reply he sent word that Ethelburga and all her attendants should follow their own Christian customs. He would do nothing to hinder her in any way. She could have her own priests or ministers and worship as she liked. "Nor did he deny but that he would embrace the same religion if, being examined by wise persons, it should be found more holy and more worthy of God."

You remember that one of the second band of missionaries from Rome was named Paulinus. He was a very good man; longing to convert souls to Christ.

He was dignified too, fit to be in charge of a

princess; and steadfast, not likely to be dazzled by high station and the life at court. For though the king's court in those days was very different from what it is now, yet the kings were very important people, and it was considered no slight honour to be connected with them.

We are told by Bede that Paulinus "was tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic," quite a fit person in every way to take charge of the Kentish princess, Ethelburga.

Paulinus was consecrated bishop by Justus, now Archbishop of Canterbury, and went to Northumbria with Edwin's promised bride and a goodly company; and with the bishop went another holy man—James the deacon.

So Ethelburga left her fair Kentish home for the rugged beauty of the north. For even Yorkshire, the southern part of Northumbria, where King Edwin mostly lived, was rough and cold compared with the Kentish valleys, the woods and hills near Canterbury, and the softly rounded downs.

A Yorkshire moor is very beautiful, but quite different from the grey-green downs of Kent. You go up and up and up by little paths, and sometimes by no path at all, by the side of mountain streams and rills tumbling over their rocky beds with a gleesome noise and a dashing of white spray over the lovely ferns growing by the banks. Trees bend their branches over the water, and cattle come down to drink. Still you go up, higher and higher,

till before you there is a wide sweep of purple heather, where the whinberries grow, and many a tiny moorland flower. No trees; nothing between you and the glorious sky; and all round you is a fresh breeze blowing your hair about, and giving you such a sensation of life and strength that you feel quite fit for anything and everything there may be for you to do. A very bracing thing is a Yorkshire moor.

Often near the streams the ground is black and boggy, and there, like stars, shine the pure white blossoms of the grass of Parnassus, as St. Columba in his missionary travels may have seen them on the banks of the Clyde.

Very different all this from the soft, hazy landscape of beautiful Kent, with its sheets of snowy cherry-blossoms in spring-time and its delicate trailing hop-vines and its radiant grass.

No doubt Queen Ethelburga, happy as she was, often thought of her old home, and missed its warmth and tender beauty. Besides, she would naturally wish that her husband would leave off his false worship and turn to the true God.

We may be quite sure she prayed for his conversion and longed for it most earnestly.

The king kept his word so far as her religion was concerned; and he did not hinder Paulinus in his efforts to convert the people. But in those days a king's influence was so strong, that his subjects were slow to accept what he rejected; so the bishop's work was slow.

But he bided God's time, for I think Paulinus had

great patience, and must often have remembered the words—

“Oh! tarry thou the Lord’s leisure ; be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart.”

And no one can ever wait like that in vain.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CONVERSION OF NORTHUMBRIA

**I**T was on Easter Eve the next year, 626, that two important events happened to King Edwin.

The king and queen, with all the court, were at their palace on the Derwent. This is supposed to have been near Stamford Bridge, between seven and eight miles from York.

The king and his followers were sitting together when a man named Eumer came from Cuichelm, the West Saxon king, to give (he said) a message to him from his master. So he was allowed to enter into the king's presence.

But he was really an assassin; for while seeming to give his message, he suddenly drew a poisoned dagger from under his cloak wherewith to stab the king.

He would certainly have killed him but that, quick as thought, Edwin's faithful thane Lilla threw himself upon the king and received the fatal wound in his own body.

There was very great confusion, a great clashing of weapons, and another of the king's followers lost his life before Eumer was slain.

This was one important event of that Easter Eve.

The other was the birth of a little daughter to the Northumbrian king and queen.

Edwin was so delighted at this that, in the presence of Bishop Paulinus, he gave thanks to his gods for his baby daughter. Upon which Paulinus returned thanks to Christ, and tried to show him that this blessing, as well as his own escape from death, came from Christ Himself.

Then the king promised that if God would grant him victory over the king who had sent the assassin, he would cast off his idols and serve Christ.

As a pledge that he would perform his promise he gave up his little daughter to Paulinus to be consecrated to Christ.

So the little Eanfled, the first-fruits of the Northumbrian Church, was baptized by Paulinus on Whitsun Day, together with several others of the king's family.

How happy Queen Ethelburga must have been !

Time went on. Edwin had marched with his army into Wessex and conquered the king who had wanted to kill him.

On his return, victorious, he allowed Paulinus to instruct him in the knowledge of the Faith. But though he had given up the worship of idols, he would not yet declare himself a believer in Christ. Still, he thought a great deal about the Christian religion, and would often sit alone quite silent, pondering whether he would believe in Christ or not.

Bishop Boniface of Rome at this time wrote to King Edwin to try to convert him. He also wrote to Queen Ethelburga, begging her to use all her

influence to induce her royal husband to believe in Christ.

But outwardly there was no change in Edwin, except his growing grave and silent while he thought over what he had been taught.

At last Paulinus came to him and, laying his right hand upon his head, asked him "whether he remembered that sign?"

The king started and trembled. Back upon his troubled mind flashed the remembrance of the stranger who had comforted him in that night of his sore anguish far away, outside the palace of Redwald, the East Anglian king. Swift through his brain rushed the promises he had made in that time of sorrow—promises he had failed to keep; and he threw himself at the bishop's feet.

But Paulinus raised him up, and showed him that he could no longer hold back from God, who had so wonderfully blessed and prospered him.

The king replied that he was both bound and willing to receive the Truth; but he would confer about it with his wise men and counsellors, and if they were of his opinion, then they would all be baptized together.

To this Paulinus agreed; and the king, holding a council, asked the wise men what they thought.

Coifi, the high priest of the false gods, spoke first.

He was a very commonplace, worldly-minded sort of man, who wanted to know whether the new religion would be of more advantage to him than the old. He said he had been a faithful servant of the gods, but they had never done much for him. So

if this religion of Christ would give him more, he would accept it.

You will see his motive was a poor one: he only wanted what would benefit him most.

But another of the wise men spoke; and it is quite certain it was not an earthly reward he was looking for. He must have known sorrow and loss in his life, and his heart was sad; for this is what he said:

"The present life of man, O King, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad. The sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm. But after a short space of fair weather he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged.

"So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."

All the other elders and counsellors said much the same thing.

Then Coifi said he wished to hear more from Paulinus; and now his heart showed a less worldly desire than before, and he advised the king to instantly set fire to the pagan temples.

Then the king gave full permission for the idols

and temples to be destroyed ; and the Faith of Christ to be taught.

So Coifi, mounted on a powerful horse and bearing arms, in defiance of the heathen custom, went off in haste ; and when he reached the temple of Godmund-ingham he threw his spear into it.

The crowd outside thought him mad to defy the gods. But when they saw that nothing happened in consequence, they grew bolder, and helped Coifi, the high priest, to burn and destroy the temple and the altars of the false gods.

And now "the Lord's leisure" had surely come, and Paulinus was full of thankfulness and joy.

While King Edwin was being prepared for baptism he built a little church of timber at York over a fountain of pure water ; and there he and his followers were baptized on Easter Day, 627.

Afterwards he built a larger and nobler church of stone over the sacred well ; and it, in turn, was succeeded by the beautiful cathedral known to this day as York Minster. Down below in the crypt you may see the very place where King Edwin was baptized, though the spring has long since dried up.

Edwin made Paulinus Bishop of York.

And now it was evident how full of zeal and love was the soul of Paulinus. With the king's permission he went north and south, instructing the people in all villages and places, and afterwards admitting them into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism.

In the river Glen in Northumberland, in the river Swale in Yorkshire, and in many wayside fountains, he baptized his converts, rejoicing greatly over them.

He went into Lindsey, and there in its old Roman city, Lincoln, he baptized Blecca, the governor, with his whole family.

There, too, near the old Roman arch, then nearly six hundred years old, which is still standing firm and strong, he built a small church of stone. That little church or its successor was dedicated to St. Paulinus for many, many years. Now another church stands there, called by mistake St. Paul's. But it was there the good Paulinus taught ; and there, when Archbishop Justus died, Paulinus consecrated Honorius, the fifth Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lincoln had been called Lindum Colonia by the Romans. It is a city extremely full of interest. It has a most beautiful cathedral crowning a lofty height, and is full of memories of the past. But to me there is no spot more interesting in it (though it has no beauty whatever) than that little church which stands on the site of that which Paulinus consecrated in the days of his wonderful Northumbrian mission.

He went farther south than Lincoln, even to the lordly Trent, where he baptized a great number of converts near the place where now stands Southwell Cathedral.

It was a wonderful work done in those six years after the conversion of the king.

Edwin also was so zealous in the cause of the Truth that he persuaded Earpwald, king of the East Saxons, to receive the Faith of Christ.

They were very bright those early days of the Northumbrian Church. And it seems sad to us that

they should have been succeeded by a time of terrible trouble and loss. But we must remember

“God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform ;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.”

## CHAPTER XIII

### ST. AIDAN AND ST. OSWALD

**B**EFORE we go on with events in Northumbria, we must turn our thoughts to Mercia, the great heathen middle country which stretched nearly across England from Wales to the North Sea.

In 626, a pagan king, Penda, began to reign in Mercia, who was so fierce and terrible that he always seems to me more like one of the fearful ogres we have read of than an ordinary man.

And, indeed, he was by no means ordinary, for he swept all before him in his desire to possess the lands and destroy the faith of the Christians. Sad to say, Cadwalla, the Celtic king of North Wales, who was a Christian, joined forces with Penda the pagan.

This may have been in revenge not only for the conquest of British territory by the English, but for the terrible slaughter of the monks of Bangor-Iscoed and the destruction of their famous monastery by Ethelfrid, king of Northumbria, some years before, as you have already seen.

Revenge is a terrible thing, and ought to be impossible to a Christian, but we cannot wonder that Cadwalla remembered the outrage.

Now Penda and Cadwalla entered Northumbria in

633. They defeated and killed Edwin at Hatfield, and for more than a year ravaged the country from end to end.

And now Paulinus was in a great strait. We may well believe it was a terrible trial to him to leave his converts; but the Queen Ethelburga had been placed in his charge, before he was made bishop. To him she had been entrusted by her brother, King Eadbald, and in her bitter desolation and sorrow he would not forsake her and her two little children, Eanfled and her brother Wuscfrea. Two little babies had died and been buried at York, and her beloved King Edwin was also gone. Truly she needed all her faith to support her in that dark hour. It would have been sad indeed if Paulinus had been false to his trust.

So he commended his converts to the care of the faithful James the deacon, his friend and fellow-worker, and took the widowed queen and her children back to Kent; and there went with them Iffi, a little boy dear to Edwin.

It was early winter, and they went by the cold and stormy grey North Sea, a fit picture of their troubled life, till they came to the queen's old home, where King Eadbald, her brother, and the Archbishop Honorius received them with great kindness.

After a while the queen and her daughter left Canterbury and went to the monastery of Lyminge, of which Ethelburga was the first abbess. The two little boys Wuscfrea and Iffi she had brought with her from Northumbria died in infancy; but Eanfled grew up and was a very good woman.

The see of Rochester being vacant, Honorius made Paulinus its bishop, and there he lived and died.

He never went to Northumbria again, but we may be sure his prayers and blessings were unceasing for the Northern Church which he had been allowed to found.

And after two years the heavy cloud over Northumbria lifted, and the work of the Church revived.

I am sure we can never think too highly of James the deacon, who was left in charge of the Church in its sore straits. He is one of those humble, steadfast, saintly souls of whom little is known, though whenever he is mentioned it is with reverence and love. He was skilled in chanting and singing, and we all know how church singing warms our hearts and cheers us. His name yet lives in the village of Akeburgh, near Richmond in Yorkshire.

But you wonder why his dwelling-place was called Akeburgh?

Some of you know that the Latin word for James is Jacobus. Sometimes he is called Jacob the Chanter, for Jacob and James are the same name.

So Jacoburgh could easily become Akeburgh, when, in course of time, its first letter was dropped. I should like you to notice names. There is another which I want you to think of—Pallinsburn in Northumberland, which means the brook of Paulinus, probably the scene of a baptism in his happy mission days.

Now when Edwin was killed at Hatfield, the son of his old enemy Ethelfrid and Edwin's cousin had Northumbria between them. They were, at first,

Christians, but they could not have been good or true; for, in order to be friends with Penda, they were so wicked as to give up their faith. And while they lived, which was not long, Cadwalla was even more the ruler of Northumbria than they.

But Ethelfrid had another son, Oswald, who was a Christian in deed and in truth. He was a brave warrior too, and in a desperate battle near Hexham, at a place called Hevenfeld (the Heavenly Field) Oswald entirely defeated Cadwalla, so that he was killed and his forces fled.

The victory was complete; and Oswald planted a cross in the ground, and gave God thanks for delivering Northumbria from her powerful foes.

This victory saved Northumbria to the English, for the Britons never tried to get it after the battle of Hevenfeld.

Oswald was one of the best kings that England has ever had. His first care was to restore Christianity, which had suffered grievously the last two years; though there were still some faithful Christians, under the care of James the deacon.

But a bishop was needed; and Oswald, who when in exile had been taught in St. Columba's monastery at Iona, sent there for a priest who would wake up again the almost slumbering faith.

The first missionary sent was Corman, but he could not understand the language of the Northumbrians. He thought they were too uncivilised to be taught, besides being very stubborn. So he returned to Iona.

But there was another monk in Iona named Aidan,

more like its founder, St. Columba, than the first had been ; and he asked Cormac if he had not been severe with the people, and forgotten that as they were but babes in the Faith they required to be fed with milk ?

It was at once seen that Aidan, with his gentle, loving spirit, was the one to obey the call of Oswald. So he was consecrated bishop.

He fixed his see at Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, as it was afterwards called—off the rugged Northumbrian coast, very near to Bamborough, the royal fortress of Oswald.

Here on this little island rose a church and monastery, in the school of which he trained and educated twelve boys, some of whom were destined to play a great part in the Church later on.

But first Aidan went about Northumbria, making converts and strengthening those who were Christians already.

And wherever he went on his mission journeys, King Oswald went with him, acting as interpreter.

For in the time of his banishment the good monks of Iona had given him shelter, and there he had learned the Celtic tongue. Aidan knew very little English, but the two friends, working together, soon made themselves understood.

I wish I could do justice to the character of St. Aidan.

Next to St. Columba—perhaps equal with him, though different—ranks this famous Celtic saint, who gave himself up to the work of Christ in Northumbria in whole-hearted consecration.

St. Oswald was so entirely one with him that they worked together in a way which told wonderfully upon the Northumbrian people. And Bede says of Oswald: "He brought under his dominion all the nations and provinces of Britain—the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, and the English. When raised to that height of dominion, wonderful to relate, he always continued humble, affable, and generous to the poor and strangers."

We are told that one Easter Day the king and Aidan were sitting at table with a silver dish full of dainties before them, when Oswald was told that a great multitude of needy persons from all parts were in the street begging.

The king immediately sent out the meat from before him, and ordered the silver dish to be broken up and divided among them.

If he would do this, we may be quite sure that he did a great many other kind and charitable deeds, and that he and Aidan were of one heart and one mind.

For seven happy years they worked together, and I think the heart of James the deacon must have rejoiced as he saw the work begun by Paulinus carried on so well by Bishop Aidan, and knew that the Church was growing strong in the land of the Angles, which Gregory and Augustine had not been able to reach.

But at the end of seven years, Penda, the mighty pagan king of Mercia, engaged Oswald in battle on the borders of Wales, and slew the good Northumbrian king.

This must have been a great sorrow to Aidan. Happily for him and for the Church, one of the successors of Oswald was Oswin, a man of great piety and devotion, who ruled over the south of Northumbria. The northern part was governed by Oswy, the brother of Oswald, who was a warlike king, but not a good man.

Not only in Mercia, but in East Anglia and Lindsey, Penda carried on now most fierce and terrible war. He went as far north as Bamborough, the royal castle on the rock, under whose shadow the isle of Lindisfarne lay calm and peaceful in the stern North Sea. He would have burnt the castle to the ground but for a sudden change of wind.

Oswy had his time fully occupied in keeping Penda at bay, but he was false to Oswin, and murdered him.

This last sorrow broke the heart of Aidan, who loved his royal yet humble disciple and most true friend with tender devotion. Twelve days afterwards he was at the church at Bamborough, when he was taken suddenly ill; and he died, lying on the ground with his head leaning against a buttress of the church.

His faithful monks, deeply mourning, buried him in his own dear island of Lindisfarne.

Iona and Lindisfarne, St. Columba and St. Aidan, go together as we think of the brave, devoted saints of the Northern Church. They might die, but their work could not perish. It lives on even now, and will live on for ever; for in those two sacred islands

holy seed was sown which sprang up and brought  
forth a glorious harvest in the days to come.

From west to east the message flew,  
Columba gave the word,  
St. Aidan bore it swiftly on,  
The message of the Lord.

One lonely isle in waters blue,  
With many a creek and sound,  
Iona lay at set of sun  
With golden splendour crowned.

That other isle 'neath Bamborough's rock  
In the grey Northern Sea,  
Greeted the earliest morning rays,  
Dawn of a day to be.

Columba with his soul of fire,  
Aidan with tenderest love,  
Gave up their lives, heart-whole and strong,  
To Christ who reigns above.

And ever as the Church's sons  
Recall their gifts of grace,  
Iona fair and Lindisfarne  
Hold high and holy place.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ST. FELIX AND ST. FURSEY IN EAST ANGLIA

I HOPE you often look at your map. You will never rightly understand about a country or its history unless you know the exact situation of each great division in it.

I want you now to notice the three large kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex; and to observe that Kent, Essex, and East Anglia are very small by comparison.

And yet a mighty work had been done in Kent, as we have read. Essex, alas! had lapsed into heathenism, and for forty years London was without a bishop. Its days of spiritual life were yet to come; and Sussex was still unconverted. Now we must turn to East Anglia.

You remember how, whether for warfare or friendliness, all the kings of England in those days had intercourse one with the other.

Edwin, the exiled Northumbrian prince, took refuge with Redwald, king of East Anglia; and there, according to the story told by Bede, Paulinus, who came from Kent, comforted him in his hour of sorrow and distress.

At any rate we know that Edwin sent to Kent for

his bride, the Princess Ethelburga, and that it was a messenger from the king of Wessex who tried to kill Edwin on the night his little daughter Eanfled was born.

So we see how, for good or for evil, each kingdom influenced the other. And I am sure you have not forgotten how Edwin, king of Northumbria, fell at last by the hand of Penda, the terrible Mercian king.

Now, while Paulinus was baptizing converts in the north, and spreading the Faith far and wide, with an energy all the stronger because it had been long suppressed, very important events were happening elsewhere.

But as I cannot tell you of them all at once, we must go back a few years to the time when Edwin of Northumbria, full of zeal for his new religion, persuaded Earpwald, king of East Anglia, to become a follower of Christ.

This Earpwald had succeeded Redwald, at whose court Edwin had taken refuge when exiled.

Earpwald was soon killed by the pagans, and East Anglia, which had never been fully converted, became pagan again.

However, brighter days were in store.

Earpwald's brother, Sigebert, had been in exile in France during his brother's life; and there good had come out of evil, for he had been baptized, and was full of love for Christ and a longing that others might love Him too.

So he sent for Felix, a monk from Burgundy, in France; who, coming to Canterbury, was consecrated by Honorius the archbishop in 631.

Felix and Sigebert, the king, did a great work. They founded a school or college where young converts could learn all that they needed for their own faith and practice, and very much more besides.

It was something like the theological colleges of our own day, and from it a stream of light poured forth on the neighbouring country which is burning yet.

Felix was made the first Bishop of Dunwich, the capital of East Anglia. He was very much helped in his work by Fursey, a monk from Ireland, a most saintly man, who was a very winning preacher, and who lived so near to God that sometimes he seemed to be more in heaven than on this earth. He and Bishop Felix were very great friends.

You remember that the Irish or Celtic Church had a few customs which were different from those of the English Church. One was, they kept Easter at a different time; another was in the manner of consecrating bishops and in administering the Sacrament of Baptism. Then, too, their priests shaved their heads in a different way.

Now, if people really love Christ, they do not look out for or magnify every point on which they cannot quite agree in the way their services are conducted, or with regard to other details.

They know that deep down in their hearts, below all these outward things, they love the same Master, and in their lives they try to serve Him. So they are content not to think quite alike on other matters which do not affect the Truth for which all Christians are bound to fight. The question of the tonsure was scarcely enough to keep two good priests apart. So

St. Felix from the Gallican Church and St. Fursey from the Irish Church worked side by side; and if the good bishop wore his hair in a kind of crown and St. Fursey wore his in a crescent, I am quite sure they never disagreed about it! They went on teaching and preaching and doing the most beautiful work there is, seeking out all stray sheep and bringing them into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

But where was the college? and where was the bishop's see?

Wait a moment, and look at your map again.

You see that East Anglia included Norfolk, Suffolk, and part of Bedford. Now look once more.

Quite at the north of Suffolk (the southern division of East Anglia), on the coast you see Dunwich.

You may look in vain on all the old maps for many places we know now as important towns, Brighton, Eastbourne, Scarborough, and many others; but you will nearly always find Dunwich.

Why is that?

Because Dunwich was a very important place. It had been a Roman station, but before that it was a stronghold of the Britons. In the time of the two holy men St. Felix and St. Fursey it became, and was for many centuries, a very important place.

It had a king's palace, a bishop's house, a college, a monastery, perhaps more than one, and several churches; besides, all the stir of life of a seaport town at the mouth of a river. It had a good harbour and a very important trade across the North Sea to Flanders, and far north to the Faroe Isles. It was a place of very great importance; and its prosperity

began in the days when the good Felix was its first bishop.

And what is Dunwich now?

Shall we in imagination take a drive and see?

But why not go by train?

Because the railway does not go so far.

We will fancy it is a lovely June day. Overhead, a deep blue sky; all around, sweet scents and happy sounds. Through miles of gorse—a sheet of gold—we go swiftly on; past the magnificent church of Blythburgh, a farmhouse or a few cottages in the distance. Along a wide stretch of common, with glimpses of sea sprinkled with white sails beyond; an old long avenue of yews to the right, then a field or two, a short hill, and we are there.

But where is the river?

There is none; only this little stream which flows as a water-splash across the road, where the pony stays a minute to cool his tired feet.

And the churches?

There is one to the right—a modern church, built on the site of an old one; but itself only about sixty years old; and sixty years is no age at all for a church.

And is this all? This little quiet village street, with its cottages and its one inn?

No, not all. We leave the carriage and go up a steep lane, and there we come upon all that is left of the Dunwich of old days. A lonely ruined church at the edge of the cliff; and near it, more inland, two fine old gateways and some ruined buildings, once inhabited by the Grey Friars.

But *old* Dunwich? where is it?





THE LAST OF THE OLD CHURCHES OF DUNWICH

Under the sea. As we stand by the ruined church of All Saints at the edge of the cliff, we try to recall how it used to be. It is very difficult ; for this lonely church stands on ground which, when the Conqueror made his Domesday Book, was seven miles from the sea, which now dashes its spray just below where we stand.

Say, smiling sea, thy shingly beach caressing,  
What whisperest thou of days long gone and past ?  
Where now thou smilest lies a buried city,  
Thou hold'st its ruins in thy bosom fast.

What hast thou left ? The ruined walls forsaken  
Of the Franciscans' home of long ago,  
Upon the height a tower defaced and shattered,  
A church forlorn ; a trembling cliff below.

It was not all swept away at once. The cliffs in that part of England are of very soft sand. Little by little the waves washing them, sometimes gently, but more often with great force, undermined the cliff ; then, perhaps, in the winter would come a severe storm, and there would be a landslip. One by one the churches near the cliff would become unsafe ; then, perhaps, discarded for new ones more inland.

The streets which looked too near the sea for comfort would be forsaken, and, after a while, they would be swept away. Perhaps in a century about three quarters of a mile would be lost. Thus it was that Dunwich, the once famous, prosperous city, was gradually swept away ; till now it is a desolate looking little place, having a wonderful history, some of which we know ; the rest lies hidden in its ocean bed.

But it was a famous place in the days of St. Felix.

Far and near he spread the good tidings. His name still lives in Felixstowe and Flixton, and his work will never die.

His friend St. Fursey did an equally good work. Remains of the foundations of his monastery at Burghcastle are still to be seen.

Sigebert, who had brought St. Felix to East Anglia, worked with him, as, a little later, good King Oswald worked with St. Aidan in Northumbria. But, after a time, he entered a monastery, and thought there to end his days.

But in 634, the year after Penda the Mercian had killed King Edwin, he invaded East Anglia. Terror filled the minds of the people, for every one feared the daring pagan monarch who carried his destroying armies into whatever part of England he chose.

The East Anglians besought their king, Sigebert, to leave his monastery and lead them against their terrible foe.

Now, although he yielded to their entreaties that he would lead them, he would not fight, for it was against a monk's vow to bear arms. He rode before his host, bearing in his hand a wand instead of a sword; and Penda was coward enough to kill him, all unarmed and defenceless as he was. When their leader was dead, it was easy work to vanquish his followers.

What sad hearts there must have been in England in those days!

Happy was it for East Anglia that Sigebert's successor, King Anna, was a very good man, who worked with St. Felix and helped on the cause of Christ as much as Sigebert.

It was no wonder that a holy man like Anna should have had three saintly daughters.

One of them, the youngest and most famous, was St. Etheldreda, who founded the abbey of Ely, of which she was made the first abbess or head. Her eldest sister succeeded her as abbess. Witburga was abbess of the monastery of East Dereham in Norfolk. Here she was buried, though many years later her remains were removed to Ely, where the three sisters rest together.

In those days very good women who wished to devote themselves to Christ often gave up everything for His sake, and lived a holy life away from the distractions of the world.

Do not forget the name of East Dereham. It is the burial-place of a good man who lived eleven hundred years after the Abbess Witburga. We shall come to him in due time.

The heathlands glow with gorse and purple heather,  
The Dunwich rose blooms pure white as of yore,  
The speedwell sheds its tender smile of greeting  
Above the graves of hearts whose strife is o'er.

Speed well ! speed well ! ye saintly souls that hallow  
The buried city of this changeful shore,  
Speed to some fuller work and nobler mission ;  
Those whom God keepeth live for evermore.

St. Felix was Bishop of Dunwich seventeen years ; and I want you to remember that the very first Englishman who was made a bishop was educated in King Sigebert's College. He was Thomas, second Bishop of Dunwich, and he came from Lindsey, one of the three divisions of Lincolnshire.

## CHAPTER XV

### WESSEX AND ITS CONVERSION

**I** TOLD you many important events happened about the same time.

Soon after Oswald, king of Northumbria, had vanquished Cadwalla, the British Christian king, and Penda, the pagan Mercian, at the battle of Hevenfeld, the great kingdom of Wessex in the south-west of England accepted Christianity.

There was a priest in Italy, named Birinus, who longed to convert those inhabitants of England who had not been reached by the Kentish missionaries, and who were still heathen. He asked the Pope, who was, you remember, the Bishop of Rome, that he might be sent on this mission. He was consecrated bishop and set forth on his journey.

It was in 634 that he landed in Hampshire, about three years after Felix had begun his work in East Anglia.

Birinus landed in Hampshire, but that was only a small part of Wessex.

If you look at the map you will see what a very large kingdom it was.

Glastonbury, the Glassy Isle, is in Wessex; and though we know really nothing certain about its very

early days, nor how it learnt its Christianity, we know as a fact that in British times a church and monastery existed there long before St. Augustine came to Kent. Indeed, there is some reason to suppose that some British Christians were there even after Birinus came. But we are not sure of this.

It was certainly nearly all pagan in 634. The worship of Thor and Woden had taken the place of the true worship of God. There was great need of some good missionary to teach the Faith of Christ, and Birinus was happy in that he supplied the need.

We know very little about his work, but we know that he made friends with the king of Wessex, whose name was Kynegils.

Now, after the battle of Hevenfeld, Oswald, the good Northumbrian king, was at the court of Kynegils, because he wished very much to marry the daughter of the Wessex king.

What a happy thing this was for Birinus! He found a staunch supporter in King Oswald; and both together they so influenced Kynegils that he gave up his pagan gods and was baptized into the Church of Christ at Dorchester.

You can tell by the ending of this name that it had been an old Roman station; for *cester* or *chester* means a camp or a fortified place. Every name in England ending like that you may be sure was once occupied by the Romans.

There is another Dorchester in England, the capital of Dorsetshire.

But the place where Kynegils was baptized was Dorchester, not far from Oxford.

There Birinus had his cathedral; and Dorchester became a very famous place in the history of the English Church. There is no Bishop of Dorchester now. The diocese (that extent of country over which a bishop rules) was so large that, in time, three bishoprics were made out of it—Lincoln, Winchester, and Oxford. But I do not think Lincoln belonged to it till some years later.

And, first, you must know that *bishopric*, *diocese*, and *see* all mean the same thing. It is the extent of what a bishop rules over, just as a kingdom is what a king rules over. Try to bear this in mind.

Secondly, what is a cathedral?

I hope you can all tell me that. It is a very large church, the chief or mother church of a diocese; and it is called a cathedral because the bishop's chair (or throne) is in it. *Cathedra* is the Latin for chair.

Why are there so many Latin words?

Because Latin was the old language of the Romans; and wherever they went they carried their language, just as when the English colonise a country, the English tongue becomes the language of the new country; and the Romans left very few places uncolonised.

Wherever the Romans went they left traces of their language; and if you begin to inquire, you will find many English, but many more French, words derived from the Latin.

In French more than in English we find this; because their country has not had so many different invaders as ours. Now, our language is a mixture

of British, Roman, English (or Anglo-Saxon), Danish, and Norman. That is why foreigners find it so difficult to learn.

Then another reason for so much Latin is, that it was the learned language. People who could read or write in old English days always learnt Latin. Books were written in it; many of the Church prayers were said in it, so that in nearly every strange country a person went to, he would feel at home in church, for the same language would be used. And it was used for many centuries in courts of law.

Now we will go back to Wessex.

It would have been very disheartening work for the missionaries, only they had the presence of Christ to support them; for very often the Christianity of the converts seemed to have no root, and withered away as soon as difficulties arose.

It was so now; but Birinus was strong in faith—

“Strong in the Lord of Hosts  
And in His mighty Power;  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.”

Kynegils, king of Wessex, died in 643; and his son, Kenwalch, who succeeded him, threw off the Faith and became a pagan again.

Kenwalch once gave great offence to Penda, the Mercian king, who made war upon him, so that the king of Wessex was forced to flee out of his kingdom and take refuge with good King Anna in East Anglia.

Anna was one of those really good men who influ-

ence those who come near them. And after some time Kenwalch repented and became a true follower of Christ.

When his kingdom was restored to him the good Birinus was dead, so Kenwalch looked about for a fit bishop to succeed him.

Now there was at this time in Ireland a French priest named Agilbert, who offered to fill the vacant post, and he was made second Bishop of Dorchester.

Agilbert naturally spoke French, and as Kenwalch knew only English, things were a little difficult. The king grew so very tired of the language he could not understand, that he made up his mind to divide the diocese. So, without consulting Agilbert (which was neither polite nor kind conduct on the part of the king), he formed another diocese at Winchester and made Wini, an Englishman, its first bishop.

Of course Agilbert did not like this; and he went over to Paris, where he was made archbishop of that city.

Kenwalch was sorry, when too late, for being so inconsiderate, for when he tried to induce Agilbert to return he met with a refusal.

However, though he would not come himself, he sent Lothere, his nephew, and he was Dorchester's third bishop.

So now all the English kingdoms had received the Faith except Sussex, where the South Saxons dwelt, and the Isle of Wight.

Time went on. In 644, two years after Oswald, the good Northumbrian king, had been slain by Penda, and two years before King Anna had

succeeded, by God's grace, in his efforts to convert Kenwalch, our good Paulinus died.

I always feel very much for St. Paulinus. He showed such wonderful patience and faith in his dealings with King Edwin in Northumbria. He was anxious with all his heart and soul for the king's conversion, but he did not despair when all seemed against him. He simply waited upon God, and used every opportunity that came in his way.

Then when at last his heart's desire was given him, his zeal knew no bounds. After about six years of marvellous success, it must have been a terrible trial to him to have to leave Northumbria and return to Kent with a sense of failure upon him.

He has been blamed for leaving his flock; but he had been made Queen Ethelburga's priest and protector first of all, and he could not forsake his charge.

I think that often and often in his home at Rochester his thoughts must have turned northward, and his prayers have gone up unceasingly for the converts there whom he had left under the care of James the deacon. How glad he must have been to hear of St. Aidan and the work at Lindisfarne, and all that was done for Christ by that holy man and the good king Oswald!

And now his own earthly life was over, and he went home to his Master, Christ; that loving Master who judges not as man judges, but who knows all.

"Yet loves us better than He knows."

I feel sure there will be a beautiful crown for St. Paulinus in the Heavenly Land.

And now ten years later, in 654, great trouble came

to East Anglia, for Penda the Strenuous was again on the warpath.

In our imaginary drive to Dunwich you know we saw the beautiful church of Blythburgh. It is a most stately church, and when we see what a very small village it is in, we wonder how it is.

But when Dunwich was an important city, Blythburgh, then twelve miles off (now it is only four), was a famous place and closely connected with royal Dunwich.

The course of the river Blyth is altered since those old days, or the sea has washed away the land in a slanting direction, so that the mouth of the river is now more than four miles farther north. But Blythburgh still stands on its banks.

It is very calm and peaceful now, as we stand on its northern side and look across a ridge of almost bare heath, where nothing grows but a little gorse and heather. But it was not quiet one terrible day in 654, when the mighty pagan warrior engaged King Anna in deadly fight. Anna had sheltered Penda's enemy Kenwalch, and Penda was not one to forgive.

The battle raged fiercely, and at last the good King Anna fell, with one of his sons. Amid the clamour and noise of war, his faithful soul went up to God.

There have been several successive churches on that site, but we are told King Anna was buried in the ground beneath the floor, near the present south porch. Though there have been so many changes since, the tradition lingers on, and we feel it is in two senses holy ground.

The ridge of heath is called Bulcamp—the open fight or camp—to this day.

But Penda, for all his giant strength and iron will and revengeful spirit, could not go on slaying kings and scattering armies for ever.

He had twice conquered Northumbria, and now he determined to go again and make a clean sweep of it. There should no longer be any Northumbria; it should all be Mercia, his own great kingdom.

But God willed it otherwise. A great battle was fought on 15th November 655, at Winwaed, near Leeds; and though the odds were against the Northumbrians, Penda fell.

It was meet that he, a man of war, should die a warrior's death at the hands of those he had so fiercely opposed.

And the death of Penda was life to the Church.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CONVERSION OF MERCIA

**I**T was wonderful how Christianity spread in Mercia after the death of the pagan warrior Penda.

Perhaps the strangest thing about it is, that it was one of Penda's own sons who did the most to bring this happy state of things to pass.

This son's name was Peada; who in the latter part of his father's life became a Christian, and tried to make others Christians too in that part of Mercia over which he held rule under King Penda.

Now, we wonder how the grim old tyrant could have allowed this effort on the part of his son. We can only account for it by feeling sure there must have been a soft spot in that hard, stern heart, as there is in the hearts of all men, no matter how fierce and cruel they seem.

Peada evidently touched the soft place in the heart of the old king, so that he was not hindered in his work.

The part of Mercia over which Peada ruled was sometimes called Mid-Anglia. It included Leicestershire, the southern part of Lincolnshire, with Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire.

I like you to know the kind of country where a mission was placed.

You have seen how the Church was planted in beautiful Kent, with its white cliffs, its softly wooded hills, its peaceful lanes.

You have crossed the grey downs of Hampshire with Birinus, and followed his footsteps by the banks of the river Thames, so lovely as it winds, amid the fertile meads, through a land of beauty till he reached Dorchester. You have stood on a breezy Northumbrian moor while Paulinus taught or gathered his converts together. You have followed him down to Lincolnshire, and have seen the baptisms in the full-flowing Trent; and you have walked with Bishop Felix and the good monk Fursey over the far-spreading commons of East Anglia; those commons golden with gorse and purple with heath under the summer sky; and you have seen St. Etheldreda among the Dunwich roses, with a soul as white as their pure, snowy petals. But now we must go to quite another kind of country, great part of it fenland, and in the eyes of some people not beautiful at all.

But there is beauty everywhere in God's world of nature, if only we have the heart and eyes to see.

The southern part of Lincolnshire, some parts of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire are called Fens, as they were then, fourteen hundred years ago. But they are so different, that except for their flatness no one would think they were the same.

Now the rich black earth is so well drained that you may see miles of smooth pasture land a radiant

green; wide fields of corn waving yellow in the breeze; or a sea of soft, pale blue blossoms where the flax is growing; and bright yellow sheets of mustard too dazzling to look upon.

But in the days of Peada, and for long after, the fens were wild stretches of peaty land, thickly covered with reeds and rushes. Great pools were everywhere, in whose still, dark waters the heron stood motionless, till, weary of his watch, he would fly away, his legs stretched out behind him, far away to some other reedy pool, full of fish and frogs and flies.

More wild-fowl than I can tell you the names of lived in the fen-land. Over the meres and the pools the brilliant dragon-fly flashed gaily, and the swallow-tail butterfly darted in and out among the willows. The largest forget-me-nots you will find anywhere grow in the fen-drains even now, but the swallow-tail is seen no more.

Nor will you ever hear, as the fen-men used to hear in Peada's days, as they rowed or punted their shallow boats along the weedy streams, a full booming sound which told them that a bittern was near. For the swallow-tail and the bittern have both died out, at least in the parts I have named; they loved their dear, damp fen.

Now, in that soft, spongy land, as it was then, you will wonder how any one could ever build a church. But it is a fact, and a very beautiful one, that nowhere in England will you find more lovely churches than in the fens.

Far away from stone quarries, with no means of conveyance but barges toiling slowly along the water-





PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

ways, bearing great blocks of stone, devout Churchmen raised their monasteries and their churches.

And how was this?

Simply it was that they were so full of devotion that they gave of their very best to God. They grudged neither time nor labour if but they might raise a temple acceptable to Him.

There is a little village in the fen-land of Northamptonshire still called Peakirk, after Peada, who built a church there in the days of old.

But you must hear something about this good king before I tell you of a monastery he founded, the successor of which in our days is the beautiful cathedral of Peterborough.

It was when Peada was hovering between paganism and Christianity, clinging rather to his old religion and yet feeling drawn to the service of Christ, that he told Oswy, king of Northumbria, that he wished to marry his daughter.

Alchfrid, Oswy's son, had married Peada's sister Kyniberga, so there was a friendly feeling between them.

But Oswy said "No," unless Peada would become Christian and help to spread the Faith.

There were great difficulties in Peada's way, but he was eager to win his Northumbrian bride; and so he turned his thoughts to the teaching and, above all, the influence of Alchfrid, who was already his own brother-in-law, as well as being brother of the maiden he loved.

After a time he was so convinced of the truth of Christianity that he determined in any case to accept

it, even if he never succeeded in winning Alchfrid's sister for his wife.

There was a royal village in Northumbria close to the Roman wall—Ad Murum. Here, at last, after much thought and preparation, Peada was baptized by Aidan's successor, Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne. And all his followers were baptized with him.

They returned to Mercia Christians, those who had left it pagans not so very long before.

No conquering host the monarch led,  
To stern Northumbria's hills,  
There was no clash of sword or spear,  
No arrow's flight that kills.

With solemn sense of earth's unrest,  
They went true Peace to find,  
And, seeking, found the love of Christ,  
Who died for all mankind.

Where, long before, the Romans reared  
Their wall of massive stone,  
Good Finan from the Holy Isle  
Baptized them Christ's alone.

But though they went true Peace to find,  
And found it as they sought,  
That little band returned to wage  
War fierce as e'er was fought.

War against sin, with hosts of ill  
To vanquish in Christ's name,  
A bloodless war, a victory sure,  
Though little known to fame.

So came they back to Mercia's land,  
To serve Christ evermore ;  
Peada, the king, to lead them on ;  
With him the saintly four.

For with the king were four priests from Lindisfarne, sent on their mission and blessed by Bishop Finan.

Their names were Cedd, Adda, Betti, and Diuma.

Full of faith and longing to win souls to Christ, they at once began their work; and, as I have said before, wonderful to relate, Penda, who was pagan through and through, did not hinder them at all.

They had to move very warily, in spite of his not interfering, because they never knew when his wrath might break out; and so, during his lifetime, there was no Bishop of Mercia.

Perhaps Penda, with his keen insight into people and things, was wide-awake to the fact that they were consistent and practised what they preached. Not like Cadwalla, the British king, who called himself a Christian and yet joined Penda in making war upon other Christians in Northumbria.

For Penda abhorred a false Christian; for which no one can possibly blame him. Nothing can be worse in the sight of God than for those who profess the Faith of Christ to be at the same time untrue to it.

Penda was honest, in spite of his paganism; and now we will let him rest.

After his death, Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, consecrated Diuma Bishop of the Mid-Angles and Mercia. It is supposed that the seat of bishopric was at Repton, in Derbyshire. Some years later it was removed to Lichfield.

About this time several religious houses were founded; chief among these, Whitby, Chester, Boston,

and Peada's own beloved monastery at Medeshamstede.

Medeshamstede, the Homestead in the Meadows—how peaceful it sounds.

In that flat, peaty land, amid silvery willows and lofty elms, with snowdrops sprinkling the ground at their roots, Peada, with Oswy, reared that famous monastery. What thought they spent over it! What prayers! What hard work! But Peada did not live to see it completed.

How it was finished by his brother Wulfere, I must tell you in the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

"A.D. 657. This year Peada died, and Wulfere, the son of Penda, succeeded to the kingdom of the Mercians.

"In his time the abbacy of Medeshamstede, which his brother had begun, waxed very rich. The king favoured it much for the love of his brother Peada, and for the love of Oswy, his brother by baptism, and for the love of Abbot Sexwulf. And he said that he would dignify and honour it, and this by the counsel of Ethelred and Morwal, his brothers, Kyneburg and Kyneswith, his sisters, and by the counsel of the archbishop, who was called Deusdedit, and by the counsel of all his Witan, both clergy and laity, who were in his kingdom; and he did so."

You have learned, perhaps, that *witan* means wise men, or council of wise men; something like our parliament.

And now over England the light of Christ's Truth was shining far and wide. Not everywhere, for

Sussex was still nearly all in the dark, and there were many pagans left in other parts. Still, it takes time to light up all the dark corners, and the Church was growing day by day.

In Kent, Northumbria, East Anglia, Wessex, and Mercia the Faith was taught and practised. And we must never forget that in Strathclyde and Wales and Cornwall, the Celtic Church, the old early British Church, still held on to the Truth.

Apart still from the English Church, because they had never recovered from that meeting under Augustine's Oak, but worshipping and serving the same God, servants of the same Master, holding on to the same Creeds. Would they never be reconciled?

Time would show.

“Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting,  
With exactness grinds He all.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE COUNCIL OF WHITBY

YOU remember how sadly Essex had fallen away from the Faith, and that after Mellitus, Bishop of London, was expelled, the see remained vacant for more than forty years. The people of London clung to their paganism. But now brighter days were in store.

I am sure you must have noticed how great was the part which the Celtic Church took in the conversion of England. We have read how Oswy had helped to convert Peada, and that he sent with him to Mercia four priests, Cedd, Adda, Betti, and Diuma, all from Lindisfarne.

Now a king of the East Saxons, named Sigebert (not the East Anglian king of that name), was, in 653, visiting Oswy at the Northumbrian court. Oswy always tried to convert his friends to Christianity, and he so convinced Sigebert of his errors that he, like Peada, was baptized by Bishop Finan at the same place, Ad Murum.

Oswy, in response to Sigebert's earnest request for an evangelist for Essex, recalled Cedd from Mercia, and he became the Apostle of Essex. Some time afterwards he returned to Northumbria for a visit,

and was there consecrated Bishop of the East Saxons, not of London, which had previously been the see.

You must remember Cedd. He was one of four brothers, Cedd, Cynebil, Celin, and Chad, all in turn abbots of Lastingham, in Yorkshire; all holy men. Two of them were afterwards bishops: Cedd, of the East Saxons; and Chad later on was Bishop of Mercia (Lichfield).

I have told you the reason that the English language is so rich is that it is derived from so many sources.

Try to remember them: Celtic, Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman. But if our language is rich, so is and was our English Church.

Think how many devoted missionaries helped to convert our dear country from heathenism to the Faith of Christ.

We vainly wish we knew who were the first missionaries; but we may be tolerably sure the Christian doctrine was brought over to Britain very early indeed, and that the Christians among the Roman soldiers were like leaven among the pagans of their day.

We remember that Patrick, a Brython, converted Ireland, and how nobly Ireland paid her debt through Columba. We have seen how resolutely the early British Church clung to its faith and its customs when swept into Strathclyde and Wales and Cornwall before the pagan invaders, those tribes we generally call Anglo-Saxons, but who were Jutes, Saxons, and Angles from across the grey North Sea. We know there were bishops in Wales, and

many monasteries and churches, before the coming of Augustine.

We have read of the devoted life of St. Columba, who founded Iona and was the great missionary saint and Apostle of the North; and we remember how, a short time before his death, the good Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine with his forty monks to convert the Angles. And we cannot have forgotten how great was the work they did in Kent; and how it was Paulinus, one of the second band of Roman missionaries, who at last took the good news to the Angles in Northumbria, and how James the deacon kept the Faith alive.

Then, when that mission needed help, Iona came to its aid. And from Lindisfarne missionaries and bishops were sent to Mercia and Essex.

The mission to Wessex under Birinus seems to have been independent of the others, as he came from Rome, and did not belong to the Roman mission at Canterbury.

But we know how Kenwâlch, the Wessex king, became a Christian through the influence of Anna, the East Anglian king; and I am sure you have not forgotten how Felix, the first Bishop of Dunwich, was a monk from Burgundy, sent at Sigebert's request by Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury, to convert East Anglia; and how he was helped by the holy man St. Furseay from Ireland.

Does it seem difficult?

I hope not. To me it is beautiful to think how very much we owe to all the various missions whose priests had the welfare of our dear Britain so much at heart.

You will perhaps hear some people say, "We owe much more to Iona than to Rome"; and others may say, "Oh no! Rome gave us most."

Dear children, this is most ungenerous, most ungrateful.

Do you on your birthdays weigh and count up the value of your presents, saying one friend's is of more value than another's, or one friend has given you more, and you are more grateful to that friend than to the one who gave you less?

I do hope such a thing never occurs to you. I should not like to have anything to do with boys and girls who treated their friends' gifts like that. If love prompts the gift, then, whether great or small in itself, its value is great, and our gratitude is for the love more than for the gift.

It is therefore most ungrateful, and shows a very bad spirit, when people begin to count up how much Rome gave us, and how much came from Iona. They both gave of their best, and their best is precious beyond words.

And they helped each other in a marvellous way.

The Celtic missionaries were full of splendid zeal, of ardent faith and love, unbounded self-sacrifice and fine courage. To begin the glorious work of winning souls to Christ none could be so fitted as they, for the fire in their souls kindled the fire in others. They swept all before them by the simple faith and noble heroism of their lives.

But they were not such good organisers as the Romans.

We may well believe that in order to solidify, to

make sure and firm what the Celtic Church had so splendidly begun, Christ our Lord, the great Head of the Church, put it into the heart of Pope Gregory to send his missionaries to plan and organise and settle on a firm foundation the work begun by their Celtic brothers; and to introduce into it some elements which it lacked.

The two missions helped each other. Iona would have been incomplete without Rome, and Rome without Iona would have been lifeless and cold.

We should thank God for both.

Just now I will not say more upon what people call these "rival claims." But they are sure to crop up again before long.

Sussex was still unconverted; but all over England, except in that neglected part, the Christian Faith prevailed.

But I am sure you will understand that when all the missions were so mixed up as regards their source, there was, at times, some confusion, owing to the different customs prevailing in them, especially where Iona and Rome had both helped to convert the people.

For instance, there was the keeping of Easter. If I tried very hard, I am afraid I could not make you see exactly what the difference was. But it is clear enough that Iona kept Easter some days earlier than Rome.

You remember Eanfled, the baby daughter of King Edwin of Northumbria and Queen Ethelburga? I am sure you have not forgotten that she was born that Easter Eve when the treacherous messenger from the king of Wessex tried to kill her father.

Eanfled is called the first-fruits of the Northumbrian Church, because she was the very first in Northumbria whom Paulinus baptized.

When Eanfled was grown up, she came back from Kent to her birthplace and became the wife of King Oswy of Northumbria.

She had been educated in Kent, where, of course, the Roman rule prevailed; and though she and her husband were both Christians, he would be keeping Easter while she was preparing for Holy Week.

This and a few other customs, which differed according to whether the people who followed them had been taught by one mission or the other, were a little confusing. So it was thought high time to bring all the Church under the same rule.

So, in Lent 664, King Oswy summoned a Council at Whitby (then called Streonshalh, the Bay of the Lighthouse), on the Yorkshire coast.

There was a famous abbey at Whitby, and the head of it, the abbess, was St. Hilda, a great-niece of King Edwin, who had herself been baptized by St. Paulinus.

St. Hilda was a remarkable woman. She was very wise, very highly gifted, and above all things she was most devoted to God.

At first she was abbess of Hartlepool; but afterward she was made abbess of Whitby, and did more good there than I can tell you.

And as Whitby was a very convenient place for the Council to meet, it was held there.

The question to be decided was, whether, in the custom of keeping Easter and in the other matters

wherein the Churches differed, the rule of Rome or the rule of Iona should be obeyed.

On the side of Iona were :

King Oswy of Northumbria ;  
Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne ;  
Bishop Cedd from Essex ;  
Hilda, abbess of Whitby, and most of the  
Northumbrian Church.

On the side of Rome were :

Queen Eanfled ;  
Agilbert, formerly Bishop of Dorchester ;  
Agatho, a priest who was with Agilbert ;  
Our old friend James the deacon ;  
Alchfrid, son of Oswy ; and his friend,  
Wilfrid, a priest from the monastery of Ripon ;  
and Romanus, a priest.

King Oswy and Bishop Colman argued in favour of the rule of Iona ; and Bishop Agilbert was called upon to answer Bishop Colman.

Now, you remember that Agilbert was a Frenchman ; and fearing that he would not be able to make himself understood, he asked Wilfrid to speak for him.

Wilfrid had been educated at Lindisfarne, and afterwards, having studied for some time at Canterbury, he had made a journey to Rome.

During his stay in that wonderful city his soul, ardent and alert, eagerly drank in all that Rome could teach. The order and rule which prevailed in the churches and monasteries, the exquisite music in the services, the civilisation, so much in advance of our far-off islands, struck him forcibly. Above

all, he became imbued with the prevailing belief that the Church of Rome had been founded by St. Peter.

Now it is impossible to prove that St. Peter ever was at Rome; and it is certain, at any rate, that he was not its first bishop.

In the first two centuries after Christ every one traced the foundation of the Church in Rome to St. Peter and St. Paul. We know quite certainly that St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and that he was beheaded there. But we do not know the same of St. Peter.

Later on the Roman Church dropped St. Paul, and kept to St. Peter alone.

At the time of the Council of Whitby, well on in the seventh century, no member of the Church of Rome would have felt any doubt about it.

We know that our Lord said to Peter, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

So as those who belonged to the Roman Church had chosen St. Peter for their founder (whether rightly or wrongly no man knows), they felt perfectly sure they were right in all things, and that the Church of Rome was superior to all other Churches.

Wilfrid adopted this view; and came back to England very strong indeed on the subject of Peter being the one apostle above all who was to be obeyed.

So when he rose to answer Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, he soon disposed of all the good bishop's arguments on the Celtic side. In a burst of fiery

eloquence, with a good deal of sarcasm in it, he exalted the authority of St. Peter over that of St. Columba, and declared that Christ Himself had made St. Peter head, not only of the Church of Rome, but of the whole Catholic Church.

Oswy wished to conclude the matter; and he asked Bishop Colman if our Lord had ever said to Columba that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Colman answered, "No."

Then the king, who evidently thought Wilfrid was on the safe side, declared that he would be on the side of Peter, the door-keeper, who had the keys of heaven, lest perchance he should refuse him when he asked for admission.

To us it seems an odd way to end so solemn a conference, and we cannot wonder that Colman, feeling that Columba and Aidan, Iona and Lindisfarne, had been alike slighted, gave up his bishopric and retired to Iona, taking with him some of his friends.

Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons, with all the others, conformed to the Roman rule.

I wonder if you have ever noticed, in a sacred picture or a stained window, or on a panel of a church screen where the saints are represented, one who carries in his hand some keys?

You will not forget now that that saint is the Apostle Peter, to whom our Lord said the words of deep and mystic meaning which made Wilfrid the victor at the Council of Whitby.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ST. WILFRID AND ST. CHAD

THE result of the decision of the Council of Whitby was, that the Church in England accepted the Roman rule, not only as regarded the keeping of Easter, but in all minor rules and customs.

This was really a very great benefit; though, at first, every one could not think so. Instead of many different Churches, the Church in Kent, the Church in Wessex, and others, we soon hear of one Church—the Church of England.

And you must remember that this Church, our own dear Church, is a true part of the Holy Catholic Church, founded in that Upper Room at Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting apostles.

But before everything was settled on a firm foundation, much was to happen; and a great deal of what was good and strong and enduring we owe to two men of entirely opposite dispositions, Chad, Abbot of Lastingham, and Wilfrid, Abbot of Ripon.

If you look at the map of Northumbria, you will see that Lastingham was in the north-east of Yorkshire, and Ripon towards the west.

Bishop Cedd died a year after the Council of

Whitby, of the plague. Tuda, the successor of Colman in the see of Lindisfarne, also died of it.

Then no one can wonder that Wilfrid, who had carried all before him at Whitby, should be chosen to be bishop.

But Wilfrid insisted upon being made Bishop of York, because Pope Gregory had placed the bishop's see there in the time of Paulinus. And because he considered the English bishops had been slow to accept all that had been decided at Whitby, he went to Gaul for his consecration.

Earnest as he undoubtedly was, it is very strange that he should have remained with the Franks nearly a year!

It was not likely that the people of Northumbria, who were anxious to have a bishop, should keep on patiently waiting and waiting. And at last they begged King Oswy to have Chad for Bishop of York instead of Wilfrid.

Chad did not wish this. He was a most gentle, humble man, and at first he could not bear to be put forward.

But at last Oswy and his people begged so hard that he consented. He was consecrated Bishop of York by Wini, Bishop of Winchester, and two Celtic bishops of the old British Church, from Cornwall or South Wales.

You must notice this, for it was the first act of union between those who, before the Council of Whitby, would scarcely have agreed to share in the sacred office.

And I like to think that it was on the head of saintly Chad that those bishops, descendants of

opposing Churches, laid their hands, and set him apart for his high and holy work.

At last Wilfrid left Gaul, and set sail for England. But now he who had been so tardy was delayed by a shipwreck on the coast of Sussex, where he suffered at the hands of the people of that coast, who were, as you know, pagans, and very cruel besides.

After some time he arrived at York; and behold, Chad was bishop in his stead!

Wilfrid was at times very overbearing; but he behaved with the utmost humility on this occasion. No doubt he saw the justice of his being put on one side. He must have known it was wrong to linger as he had done—he, a shepherd of the flock of Christ, neglecting his sheep.

He showed the true spirit of penitence in accepting his punishment meekly. Without making any fuss he quietly retired to his abbey of Ripon, which he devotedly loved.

Nor was he sullen and revengeful in any way. He knew quite well that he had, by the laying on of hands of the bishops in Gaul, received the special gift of the Holy Spirit for his office.

He did not say, "As I am not allowed to be Bishop of York, I will not do the work of a bishop elsewhere."

Sometimes his aid was needed in Mercia or Kent, either to confirm or ordain; and he went gladly to do what was given him to do.

Wilfrid realised very fully that he was not Bishop of York only, but a bishop in the Church of God. Where help was wanted, there, if he could, he always gladly gave it, as you will see later on.

But we must go back to Essex for a little while before relating more of the life of St. Wilfrid and St. Chad.

Essex had always been very slow to believe, and also very easily turned away, as you will remember. In 665, one year after the Council of Whitby, you remember that through the death of Cedd, Essex was left without a bishop.

Wulfere of Mercia was really lord of Essex; "overlord" he was called. Under him were two kings, Sebbi and Sighere.

Sighere had no firm grasp of the Christian Faith; so he turned pagan again, became an apostate (that is, one who turns away from his faith). Of course his subjects did as he did. It took more courage than they possessed to stand up against their king.

Happily for the other part of the kingdom, Sebbi was a steadfast follower of Christ; and his people kept faithful too.

When King Wulfere heard of Sighere's sad conduct, he knew he ought to do all in his power to win Sighere and his people back. He did not say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He knew quite well that if we make no efforts to bring back to the fold of Christ those who have strayed from it, our sin is as great as theirs.

The Mercian bishop at that time was Jaruman, Bishop of Lichfield; and Wulfere sent him, with a company of priests and teachers, to Essex. Before long they won back those who had strayed; and the Christian Faith was, at last, firmly established there.

We left Chad at York, and Wilfrid at Ripon, both showing a rare quality of submission ; for it was quite as hard for Chad to know he was in Wilfrid's place as it was for Wilfrid to see him there. Perhaps harder ; because Wilfrid knew he deserved for a time to be put on one side.

Wilfrid loved his abbey of Ripon.

If you ever go to the quaint old Yorkshire town on the banks of the Skell, you will find in its cathedral some relics of the wonderful man who once dwelt there. Ripon seems to me full of memories of that fiery heart which was yet so pliant under the reproving Hand of God.

We have been so interested in the affairs of Northumbria—and indeed in the early history of the Church they are of intense interest—that we have not lately said much about Kent.

At this time the work of the Church in Kent did not go on far beyond its limits. Canterbury was becoming a very important place, and much was going on there which would leave its mark on the English Church in the days to come. But it was not taking an active part in the whole Church in England.

But in 668 a very remarkable man was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. His name was Theodore. He was a Greek from Tarsus, in Cilicia.

Do you remember who also was a native of Tarsus? A wonderful man, who said he was "a citizen of no mean city"? One who, first a persecutor of Christians, became afterwards a most devoted follower of Christ? Who, after many missionary

journeys, many perils, and wonderful success in his work of winning souls, was a prisoner at Rome, and died there a martyr's death?

Surely you remember him: Saul of Tarsus, afterwards the Apostle St. Paul.

And you must remember that it was probably some of St. Paul's work which Archbishop Theodore was appointed to continue in this little island of ours.

Theodore was sent to Canterbury by the Pope Vitalian, at the request of Oswy, king of Northumbria, and Egbert, king of Kent. His friend Hadrian, a very learned man, came with him.

Archbishop Theodore by no means intended to remain in Kent alone. As archbishop—and you know that means "chief bishop"—he knew it was his duty to visit every part of the province committed to him. So in 669 he began his visitation tour.

First he went to Rochester, and consecrated Putta to the vacant see. Putta was a famous church musician.

Then he went on to East Anglia, and consecrated a new Bishop of Dunwich, Bisi by name. Later in the year he visited York.

Now Theodore and Chad were as unlike as two people could possibly be; but the energetic archbishop, who liked to order every one and everything, was drawn towards the gentle Chad, whose zeal and love and power of winning souls was very, very soon seen and appreciated by the great archbishop.

But Theodore was not one to pass over anything that he considered wrong; and it was distinctly wrong and illegal that Chad should be Bishop of

York, when Wilfrid had been consecrated to that see before him.

So Chad at once submitted to the decision of his superior officer and retired to his own abbey of Lastingham; and Wilfrid left the obscurity of his Ripon monastery, and soon showed the people what was his idea of the work of a bishop in the Church of God.

No place in his vast diocese of York was left unvisited. He rode about everywhere; saw that the clergy were doing their work; planted fresh mission stations; and so inspired every one by his zeal that new churches sprang up, and those already in existence were regulated and improved under his direction.

He ordained priests and deacons, held confirmations, and strengthened the clergy in their faith.

He was always courteous and kind; very full of care for the good of others, sparing himself never, but going on with all he undertook, to the very end; overcoming all difficulties with a bright and buoyant spirit. No wonder his work succeeded.

And in spite of all he did, or rather, aiding all he did, was his simple, self-denying life; as simple and full of sacrifice as that of Chad himself.

But he could do what Chad could not. The simple-minded, home-loving Northumbrian saint was happy so long as he saw his people leading good Christian lives; and he wished nothing better for them than to worship in the rude, wooden churches with thatched roofs, such as he and the monks of Lindisfarne and of Iona had been satisfied with all their lives.

But Wilfrid had seen at Rome the beauty of order and rule, he had realised the strength which comes with unity, and had felt his heart uplifted by the beautiful church music which, as yet, in Northumbria was scarcely known.

He was not satisfied with the meagre kind of ritual in the wooden churches. He felt in his heart that nothing was good enough for the worship of God—the most beautiful buildings, the most perfect music, all were to him the expression of the heart's devotion, and he wanted to see the Northumbrian Church improved in these matters.

The early Church was in every sense a missionary Church. The holy teachers spread the Truth in all directions; but it was necessary afterwards to bind the converts together, to realise the one communion and fellowship, and this Wilfrid, in a very large measure, accomplished.

But there was plenty of room, too, in the Church for St. Chad's gentle, unobtrusive work. Archbishop Theodore knew this, and he made him Bishop of Lichfield when Jaruman died. Some day I hope you will read a quaint old poem which tells of St. Chad in his cell at Lichfield; of King Wulfere and his brother, and of what they did for the abbey of Medeshamstede.

All St. Chad's life was lovely, from the time when he was one of St. Aidan's twelve boys at Lindisfarne till his beautiful death, of which I will tell you by and by.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ARCHBISHOP THEODORE

**T**HEODORE did a splendid work for the Church. He and Wilfrid were two very remarkable men; perhaps too much alike to agree comfortably, as you will soon find out.

Having settled Wilfrid at York and Chad at Lichfield, Theodore turned his attention to Wessex.

Winchester was made the seat of the bishopric of Wessex instead of Dorchester; and when he returned to Canterbury he was ready for other important matters, as all the bishops in England had acknowledged his authority as Primate, or chief, of the English Church.

But though he was Primate, he by no means wished to have all the power in his own hands. He wished to have rules and laws made for the right government of the Church; so he summoned all the bishops to meet him at a Synod, or Council, at Hertford, where many good laws were made. These laws were called *canons*, and you must remember that canon law regulates Church matters.

This Council of Hertford was held in 673, and was the first Council of the Church of England. In our own day the clergy hold their convocations, or

councils, and decide all important Church matters. But the Council of Hertford was the first of the kind, so that we owe the good custom to Archbishop Theodore.

Count up how many years ago it was, and you will see how old our dear Church's customs are.

But Theodore did not stop here. He saw that some of the dioceses were too large; no bishop could rightly rule over more than a certain number of clergy and churches; and where the churches or mission stations were scattered, the difficulty was, of course, increased.

So, first of all, he divided the see of East Anglia; and, while leaving a bishop at Dunwich, he consecrated another for Elmham in 673. There are two places of the name of Elmham, but no one now is quite sure which was the bishopric.

Then Hereford was made a bishopric, which was very good for the great kingdom of Mercia. And now came Northumbria's turn.

Wilfrid was a fine ruler. He had not only a warm, devoted heart, but he had a great intellect. He was full of energy and enthusiasm; he loved to rule, and no man could rule better. But Theodore considered he ought to cut down Wilfrid's work; it was too much for one man.

Not that Wilfrid thought this. He was ready to spend and be spent to the utmost limit of his strength; he never spared himself. And now, because Theodore knew that he should never convince Wilfrid that his diocese was too large, the archbishop did what was really a very unkind and





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unjust thing: he divided the large diocese into four without consulting Wilfrid about it!

It was a very great insult, and the Bishop of York felt it keenly. Perhaps if he and Egfrid, the king of Northumbria, had been friends he might have asked his aid. They had once been very great friends, but Wilfrid had so offended the king that he never forgave him, and the bishop knew there was no hope in that quarter. So he also took a very bold and unwise step and appealed to Rome.

Now, as I told you, the people of the Church of Rome felt quite sure that St. Peter had founded it, and that it was first in all the world.

This had not been so in the very early days, when the Pope, or Bishop, of Rome was only first among his equals.

Do you understand this? Now, think.

The head boy in his form at school is head because he knows more, or is more clever, or more industrious than the other boys in the form. He is not master.

So, in the early days of the Church, Rome was more civilised than any other city. The old Romans had always been conquerors, and when what is called their civil or state power grew less, they threw all their great strength, their powers of organising and governing, into Church affairs. And, after a while, the Pope claimed for himself power to which he had no right at all. This had begun even in Wilfrid's time.

Of course, if there had been any doubt as to how to govern the Church, the Pope, being learned in such matters, might have been asked to advise the English. But it was quite another thing for a bishop

to ask a foreign power to interfere between him and his archbishop and his king. For you must remember that in the old days in England, Church and State always worked hand in hand. The Church in England is older than the State. The Church was made one before the seven kingdoms were made one. Do not forget this.

Wilfrid not only offended the archbishop by disputing his authority, but he made of the king a worse enemy than before, by appealing to Rome.

Do you think he was right to rebel against injustice?

Dear children, we all know there is nothing harder to bear than injustice. But it is our duty to obey those in authority. It is the duty of the bishops and clergy to obey the archbishop, just as it is a soldier's duty to obey his commanding officer, even when that officer makes a mistake.

Do you remember hearing a poem called "The Charge of the Light Brigade"?

I will tell you about it.

During a war with Russia, in which English, French, and Turks fought side by side, a very sad thing happened.

The officer in command of a company of soldiers called "The Light Brigade" gave a wrong order. What happened?

"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Though every soldier knew  
Some one had blundered;  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs but to do or die,  
Into the valley of death  
Rode the six hundred."

Very few came back from that disastrous charge at Balaklava. But the splendid discipline of those men lives for ever in the history of Englishmen.

“ Honour the charge they made !  
Noble six hundred ! ”

Yes ; obedience is of the utmost importance. There can be no rule or order without it. Instant obedience, unquestioning obedience.

Sometimes it is very hard to obey ; but we are children of God, soldiers of Christ, and a soldier's first duty is obedience.

I feel very sorry for Wilfrid. It was a very great trial for him. But he made a mistake in asking a foreign bishop to interfere ; and for many long years the Church felt the effects of it in the growing power and interference of Rome with our Church's and our country's affairs.

But we must see what happened.

Wilfrid wrote to the Pope, and set off on his journey to Rome.

Archbishop Theodore also wrote to the Pope, and explained the state of affairs. Then he troubled himself no more about the matter, but divided the diocese. So there were now four bishoprics : York, Hexham, Lindisfarne, and Lindsey.

Wilfrid went on his way. But being overtaken by storms he was forced to land on the coast of Frisia, that country near the Rhine which is now in Holland or the Netherlands. Here he spent the winter.

How do you think he spent it ? Did he nurse his grievances and sullenly waste his time in thinking of his hard lot ?

No! Wilfrid was too true a servant of Christ for that. He was not his own; he was bound to do all he could for his Master. So, seeing how ignorant the pagan Frisians were, he began to teach them.

He made good use of his time; and Wilfrid, the first missionary of the English Church, did splendid work that cold, dreary winter.

We are told by Bede that "he instructed many thousands of them in the Word of Truth." And we know that when they were ready for baptism, he baptized them and received them into "the Ark of Christ's Church."

Having done this blessed work, when better weather came he once more set out for Rome.

The Pope Agatho received him gladly; and in Bede's *History* we read that Wilfrid was called "the Beloved of God."

He returned to England, bringing with him a letter from the Pope.

Now, as you read history you will find that a letter from the Pope is always called a Papal Bull. What is the meaning of this?

The Pope, of course, sealed his letter; and the seal was called "bulla." Pope, you know, simply means Papa or Father, and so a letter from the Pope was called a Papal Bull.

Wilfrid at once found that neither archbishop nor king would have anything to do with this Papal Bull, which ordered that Wilfrid should be restored to his diocese, and if that diocese was to be divided, Wilfrid himself was to appoint the bishops.

Egfrid and Theodore were more angry about this than I can tell you. Naturally they objected to the Pope's interference. But they did not wish to break with the Pope, because Rome was the chief Church in Christendom, and Theodore had himself been sent from Rome; to say nothing of England having been converted in a great measure through Augustine and the missionaries from Rome. So they chose to lay all the blame upon Wilfrid, and after shutting him up in prison for several months, they banished him from Northumbria.

These repeated troubles were enough to try the stoutest heart; and we may be sure that Wilfrid, with his high spirit and sensitive nature, felt them very deeply. Still, he remembered he was not his own, but Christ's.

He went into Mercia and built a small monastery. But driven from Mercia by King Egfrid, he went to Essex, where the fury of his enemies still pursued him. At last he went to Sussex, the one portion of England that remained pagan.

Ethelwalch, the king of Sussex, and his wife, Ebba, were both Christians, but, strange to say, they did not influence their people. Also there was at Bosham a small Irish monastery, presided over by Dicul, a friend of Fursey. "But," says Bede, "none of the natives cared either to follow their course of life, or hear their preaching."

This being the case, no missionary light proceeded from the little religious house at Bosham. The country was wrapt in darkness and ignorance.

You will not be surprised to hear that, with the

missionary spirit strong within him, Wilfrid now set about converting the people of Sussex.

You remember how very badly these poor, wild, ignorant people had treated him when he was wrecked on their coast in returning from France after his consecration.

Now they were to see how the Christian religion teaches us to return good for evil.

The poor Sussex people were then suffering from a grievous famine. I think they must have been very dull and slow; for though they could fish in the rivers, they did not know how to fish in the sea! St. Wilfrid showed them how to do this; and as he taught them how to cast their nets into the sea and draw them to land, no doubt he remembered our Lord's words: "from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

He first won their hearts, and then preached to them the Word of Life.

Northumbria's breezy moorland,  
 Fair Ripon's peaceful shade,  
 Belov'd of Bishop Wilfrid—  
 He left them undismayed:  
 To Rome his fiery spirit  
 Sped for redress in wrong,  
 But he found the Romeward journey  
 Disastrous, cold, and long.

Cast on the barren sandhills  
 Of Frisia's flat, dull shore,  
 The mighty bishop felt that here  
 Christ opened wide His door.  
 To show the Frisian people  
 The way into Christ's fold,  
 The shepherd of Northumbria  
 The Gospel story told.

All through the dreary winter  
He laboured night and day,  
In prayer, in fast, in vigil,  
In tenderest love alway ;  
Till stubborn hearts and lowly  
Woke up beneath his care,  
And Frisia's Christians knew the peace  
Of those Christ's kingdom share.

When back from Rome came Wilfrid,  
He met with pain full sore ;  
In prison pent his spirit knew  
Eight weary months and more ;  
When free at last to exile  
The man of God was driven,  
He made his lonely banishment  
A mission-field for heaven.

In Wessex and in Mercia  
He preacheth the Word of Life,  
Till farther south he turned his steps  
Pursued by fiercest strife :  
To the remotest southward  
He turned his steadfast face,  
To Sussex, where he knew there dwelt  
A dull, yet cruel race.

Forgiving all the trouble  
The Sussex folk had brought  
To him when wrecked upon its coasts,  
He now their welfare sought.  
Pressed sore by woful famine,  
He helped them in their need :  
And in their softened hearts he sowed  
The precious Gospel seed.

Then in the fair, sweet island  
Seen from each Sussex height,  
Like a soft cloud on ocean's face,  
The beauteous Isle of Wight ;  
He lifts aloft the Holy Cross,  
Redemption's blessed sign,  
And wins this ocean-jewel  
In Christ's own Crown to shine.

O ! dauntless heart and spirit,  
Rack'd by a thousand cares,  
By sorrows keen and pangs of grief  
Seizing him unawares ;  
Naught could St. Wilfrid hinder  
From sowing far and wide  
The good seed of the Kingdom  
For which the King had died.

Learn we this first great lesson,  
Wherever we may be,  
God says to every one of us,  
" Child ! I have work for thee. '  
Then wheresoe'er our lot is cast  
Let us with willing heart  
Take up the task God gives to us,  
And bravely do our part.

## CHAPTER XX

### MORE ABOUT THEODORE AND WILFRID

**I**T was in 687 that Wilfrid returned to Northumbria. Three years he had laboured among the South Saxons. He had built a monastery on some land given him by the king. You can find the place on the map, as it bears the same name now which it bore then, all those centuries ago, Selsey, which means "the island of the seal."

There, where the seals used to play among the rocks, or sit looking at each other with solemn faces, making soft, sighing sounds as they basked in the sun, Wilfrid and his monks prayed and worked and toiled in the service of the Master. It was not till 709 that Selsey was made a bishop's see.

Many years afterwards, in 1070, the bishopric was transferred to Chichester, and so it remains, with a bishop and cathedral, to this day. But you must not forget that the first Sussex bishop was Bishop of Selsey, "the island of the seal."

And now an event came to pass at which all who reverence Theodore and Wilfrid must rejoice. The Bishop of London at that time was a very holy man named Earconwald; and at his house a meeting was arranged between the two famous men who had

been so long estranged. They became friendly again, and Wilfrid was restored, as far as possible, to his old Northumbrian see. This now included York, Hexham, and Ripon, and we may well imagine how happy he was in once more ruling over his own beloved people.

But this peaceful state of things did not long continue. By this time the great Archbishop Theodore was a very old man, and in 690 he died.

Very soon afterwards fresh troubles came upon Wilfrid. Aldfrid, the king of Northumbria, took upon himself to take away one part of the diocese and make it into a separate bishopric altogether.

And what part do you think that was? Which part of his diocese would it most distress Wilfrid to lose? Certainly he loved his own dear Ripon best of all. He had spent his most peaceful days in its monastery, he had built the church, he loved it as his own child. And now he was told to give it up; or, rather, it was taken from him without his being asked. There was nothing for him to do but to submit to it.

But this was a point beyond Wilfrid; and indeed it seems to us a cruel thing for the king to have required. He would not give up Ripon, and so he was banished again!

At first he went to Mercia, and there took charge of the bishopric of Leicester. But still there was the bad feeling about Ripon, and the king's treatment of Wilfrid rankling in many hearts.

At last, in 702, Archbishop Bertwald summoned a Council at Easterfield, where Wilfrid was ordered to submit.

This he would not do; and though he was sixty-eight years old, he went again to Rome to appeal to the Pope.

This was the sort of thing which enraged the English people, who said the Pope had no right to interfere. Nor had he, though, of course, he could see the injustice of the Northumbrian king's treatment of Wilfrid.

The Pope was John VI. He wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the king, suggesting that they should settle the matter by another Council. The archbishop agreed to this, but the king did not. However, Aldfrid died in 705; and then, at the Council held on the banks of the Nidd, Wilfrid was restored to the bishoprics of Hexham and Ripon, and recovered a great part, though not all, of the possessions he had lost.

For three years Wilfrid lived and worked in his beloved Northumbria, with all his old fire and energy, and we may be sure, too, with all his great loving heart. From time to time he visited the monasteries he had founded in Mercia, and at one of them he died, at a place called Oundle, in Northamptonshire.

They carried his body, worn out with years and work and trouble, back to his peaceful home at Ripon, and there he rests at last.

I hope some day you will see Ripon. It is a most quaint old city, with a town hall, over which you can read the words: "Except ye Lord keep ye city ye wakeman waketh in vain."

The office of wakeman (or watchman) no longer

exists. The last wakeman became the first Mayor of Ripon in 1604.

But every night at nine o'clock a horn is blown three times before the mayor's house, and then three times at the Market Cross. This is a survival of the old custom of blowing the horn in the evening when the watch was set.

Of course the great interest of Ripon centres in its cathedral, with the crypt beneath. It is by no means as beautiful as most of our cathedrals, and in very sad times that fell upon it more than three hundred years ago some of its fine architecture was spoilt. But it is intensely interesting; full of associations of the great St. Wilfrid who did so very much for the Church of England.

He not only founded monasteries, built churches, established a school for church music, and brought about unity between the Celtic Church in England and that other Church which we owe to Rome, but he was a missionary of the first order.

By this I mean he did not consult his own tastes or wishes as to the people to convert, but wherever he was, there he remembered he was not his own, he belonged to Christ. Soul, body, time, strength, talents, all were his Master's: and to His service they were freely dedicated, with grand, whole-hearted devotion. He had his failings; who has not? But they were the failings of a strong, earnest, and most lovable character. From his boyhood's days at Lindisfarne, where he learnt his lessons and asked many a question of the good monks, storing his mind with all they could teach him, till he lay down

to rest at Oundle, his life's work done, he had made the most of his talents, his time, his strength, and his whole life. He was "faithful unto death," and we may be quite sure there is reserved for him "a crown of life."

And yet we must not forget that probably to his persistent appeals to Rome we owe the beginning of that interference of the Pope with our Church affairs which, at last, wrought such dire mischief and trouble. We shall learn all about this as we go on.

The Church of England owes so very much to both Theodore and Wilfrid that it has been difficult to make it easy for you to understand. But I think you will see that what was wanted in the Church when Theodore came to Canterbury was order and rule.

How can I explain this?

Suppose we take a large school. Boys of various ages, from five to twelve, are all gathered together in one large room, where no teacher knows which is his own special work.

We will suppose that they are all good children, or that, at least, they all mean to be good. They have learnt their lessons, they have come to work, but there is no one wise enough to direct them or classify them. They are sitting together without rank or order, and the teachers are feeling as confused as the scholars.

What a hubbub there would be! What confusion! Perhaps the teachers would try to hear some of the lessons, but how could the little ones and the big ones say them together? or how could the quick boys and the dull ones keep pace with each other?

Then perhaps some of the little ones would be

fretful and the older ones angry; and while some were trying to learn one thing, others would be learning another. It would be most confusing.

Now, suppose that upon this scene of confusion and strife enters a headmaster.

At once he sees what is wrong. The little ones are sent off to a room by themselves, with a teacher who understands children and their ways. Form after form is arranged, a teacher is appointed to each. Tasks are given suited to the ability of the learner. Obedience is insisted upon; and what happens?

The school is a different place altogether. When a boy has only one thing to think about, he can do it. When a teacher has not a dozen subjects to teach at one time, or pupils of all ages to provide for, he can see his way clearly.

Order, obedience, rules, government, these Archbishop Theodore brought into the Church, in such a way that the most was made of every man's ability; the proper path in life was chosen for each minister of God; and at stated times, in large councils of the clergy, they came with their grievances, if they had any; with their difficulties, which they were sure to have; with puzzling questions which they could not solve; and there they would find a hearing.

Theodore did all this. But he did still more.

In those old days, when the towns were small and the houses scattered over a wide space, the people were dependent upon the priests of the nearest monastery for the ministrations of religion. He would visit them, teach them, baptize the children, celebrate the Holy Communion, marry those who wished to

marry, bury the dead, and discharge all other duties of his high office; bringing comfort and strength with the gracious words of absolution to those who had sinned and were penitent, and strengthening and building up the faith of those who were weak.

Then on the great festivals, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, all the people would make a pilgrimage to their Mother Church—the cathedral of their own diocese.

Now Theodore began to divide into parishes the scattered houses of townships or villages, and encouraged the lords of the manors, that is, the owners of the land, to build and endow churches; that is, to give a certain sum of money to provide for ever for the stipend of the parish priest. Then the lord of the manor who did this would have the patronage of the living, that is, the right of appointing a clergyman to his church.

Sometimes the payment of the clergyman's stipend would be made in tithes. A tithe of anything is, you know, the tenth part of it. A farmer might rent of the lord of the manor a farm worth £100 a year, subject to tithe. I mean, he would pay £90 of this rent to his landlord, and £10 of it to the priest, or parson, as he was sometimes called—from the Latin word *persona*, which means *the person*—so that it shows he was one of importance.

It was no hardship to pay tithes. It was only as if the farmer paid part of his rent to his landlord, and part to his parish priest.

This was the origin of tithes, of which you may hear a good deal as you grow older.

It took a very long time to divide the whole of England into parishes, but Theodore certainly began the work.

And you must remember that the clergy who lived in the ordinary world among their people in town or village were called *secular* clergy; while those who lived in monasteries were called *religious*, because they obeyed the rule of the monastery.

*Religious* comes from two Latin words, one of which means "to bind."

Now the monks were bound by their vows to lead the life of the monastery. The secular clergy were not bound by monastic rules.

You must remember the difference. We shall certainly meet with the two words again.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CONTEMPORARIES

WHAT a hard word ! What can it mean ?

I will tell you. It comes from two Latin words : *con*, together, and *tempus*, time.

A man who lives at the same time as another is called his contemporary.

Never pass over a word that you do not understand. Ask some one to explain it to you.

Now, although we have been reading a great deal about Archbishop Theodore and Bishop Wilfrid, we must not forget there were other good men and women who were their contemporaries. I cannot tell you of them all, but there are some whose names you must never forget :—St. Chad, the saintly Bishop of Lichfield ; St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne ; Earconwald, Bishop of London ; Benedict Biscop ; St. John of Beverley ; Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne ; Cædmon, the poet ; and the one to whom we owe the knowledge we possess of all the rest, the Venerable Bede.

Nor must we forget the saintly women who had such influence for good on the people of that day, and through them on those of future years :—St. Ethelburga, the widowed queen of Edwin, abbess

of Lyminge, and a great power in Kent; St. Hilda, great-niece to King Edwin, who was abbess of Whitby, a light bright as that of her own Streonshalh in Northumbria; and St. Etheldreda, who left her Dunwich roses for the Northumbrian moors, but gave up her high worldly position, state, and power in order to devote herself entirely to God.

From out of the fenland of Cambridgeshire there rose the isle of Ely, a little rising ground surrounded by streams and swamps and silvery willows. Very dreary and dull it must have been in those far-off days before the fen was drained. But as she wished to leave the world, she could not have chosen a better place.

Here she built a little humble chapel to the glory of God, which in after days grew into the beautiful minster which we now know as Ely Cathedral.

But we must go back to St. Chad.

You remember how he left his beloved abbey of Lastingham to be consecrated Bishop of York during Wilfrid's long absence in France, and I hope you have not forgotten how Celtic bishops assisted at his consecration. I told you how humbly he took upon him the office of bishop, and how meekly he resigned it when Theodore reinstated Wilfrid.

Theodore, as you have seen, had such a fiery spirit and strong will he carried all before him, but he loved the gentle Chad. Once, when he saw how tired he was with his long journeys on foot—for he deemed it presumptuous to ride,—Theodore gave him a horse, and himself lifted him on his back.

I know a church in Yorkshire on the moors, so

far in the west of the county that Great Whernside is in its parish. This church is dedicated to St. Chad, and may perhaps be on the site of one which he himself consecrated when Bishop of York. Middlesmoor is the name of this parish.

The lovely, restless, bewitching river Nidd runs through it, or rather under it. First, you see the river come tumbling along in haste and hurry-skurry over its limestone bed. And then suddenly it leaves its bed and bores a deep, dark, fearsome hole, where the water tumbles in, boiling, dashing, foaming; and then for two miles you see it no more.

But you can follow its forsaken bed, which is very beautiful, fed by moorland streams, and fringed by lovely flowers, and overhung by the drooping boughs of trees. At the end of the two miles this shallow bed skirts a field shaped something like a triangle. At the top of this field—the base of the triangle, at the foot of a steep hill—are two dark, gloomy holes side by side.

Out of these dark caverns comes the rushing Nidd, divided into two streams. How solemn and black the water looks as it rushes swiftly on in two streams, one on each side of the field. At the point of the triangular meadow the streams meet and blend, and together fall into the bed of the river waiting for them; and they flow on as one stream to the end.

It is a charming little river, and it flows partly through the old forest of Nidderdale, which in the olden days was full of trees and must have been very dull and gloomy. Even now you can see, in the rough track by the side of the river, the old stone

posts placed there to guide travellers through the forest depths.

I tell you all this because I want you to understand the difficulties there were in those days for missionaries and bishops and others who had to make long journeys to different parts of their dioceses, often through forests where wolves might be roaming about, or across deep streams, or up steep moorland paths.

There were no carriages in those days. Can you fancy it? No trains, no bicycles, no motor cars—all the journeys had to be made on foot or on horseback.

Bishop Wilfrid rode to the distant parts of his diocese, not that he was too proud to walk, but because in his very busy life he saved both time and strength if his good horse carried him on his travels.

Bishop Chad preferred to walk. Probably he remembered that on the one occasion we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ rode (except when, a helpless Babe, he was taken into Egypt) was when He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He would, no doubt, have said that what was good enough for his Master was good enough for the disciple; and he was so very lowly in his own eyes he wished to take the lowest place.

But Archbishop Theodore wished him to spare his strength for his great work, so he gave him a horse on which to ride, and insisted on his using it.

At Lichfield he built a small and very humble dwelling for himself and his few companions; and

whenever he could spare time from his public duties as bishop, he used to pray and read with the brothers.

Bede tells us in how beautiful a way came the earthly end of his beautiful life.

He was attacked by a pestilence which had been fatal to many of his clergy; and this is how the news came that his work on earth was done.

There was a monk named Owin, who had come from Lastingham to be with Chad at Lichfield; and one day when at work in the fields he heard the most lovely sounds of singing, and they seemed to come from heaven. He listened, and the voice seemed to enter the oratory where St. Chad was, and then most sweetly return to heaven.

The bishop then clapped his hands for Owin to come to him, and said, "Make haste to the church and cause the seven brothers to come hither, and do you come with them."

After speaking to them in his own loving way, and giving them counsel, we are told by Bede that he said: "That amiable guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, has vouchsafed also to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return, therefore, to the church, and speak to the brethren, that they in their prayers recommend my passage to our Lord, and they be careful to prepare for their own."

When Owin stayed to ask what the music meant, St. Chad replied, "They were the angelic spirits, who came to call me to my heavenly reward, which I have always longed for, and they promised they

would return seven days hence, and take me away with them."

And so it came to pass; for seven days later St. Chad died, on the 2nd of March 671, two years after Wilfrid had succeeded him at York.

There was another holy man whose name was Cuthbert; whose life was written by Bede both in prose and verse.

If you look at your map you will find now in the southern part of Scotland a place called Melrose. In the seventh century it was included in Northumbria; for you remember that in the days of King Edwin, and for some time later, Northumbria reached as far as the Firth of Forth, as the word Edinburgh tells us plainly—the burgh of Edwin.

Cuthbert when quite young was a shepherd. What thoughts and inspirations may have come to him as he kept his flocks on the lonely hillsides I cannot say. It was "when shepherds watched their flocks by night" that the glorious Christmas vision came to them; and to Cuthbert in the way of his duty, as he pondered the mysteries of God's love, came an inner Voice which called him to another life.

So one day he came to Melrose Abbey and asked the monks to take him in, as he wished to join them and be a monk himself, because of a beautiful vision he had had about St. Aidan.

So there the shepherd lad was received and trained and taught according to the teaching of Iona; and when he became a monk he devoted himself to the service of Christ in a remarkable manner.

In 664 he became prior of the monastery; a prior

is second in rank to an abbot, and his was a post of great influence, being, as the word tells us, first among the monks. And now Cuthbert's real work began.

Because he had been a shepherd lad himself he knew all the troubles of the poor, with whom he had been brought in contact, though not really poor himself; and could speak their rough dialect, so that he had marvellous power with them. He was so kind and sympathetic that they told him their sorrows and their sins as they would tell no one else. You may be sure he was very thankful to be a priest and thus able to comfort them, to assure them of God's forgiveness, and to help them to lead better lives.

He was very much attached to the old Celtic customs; but, after the Council of Whitby, he conformed to those of Rome, as had been decided there.

Before very long he was made prior of Lindisfarne, and to him was given a very hard task, nothing less than the effort to induce those who loved the Celtic ways to give them up and adopt those of Rome.

Very few people could have done this without offence. But Cuthbert, in his own firm yet loving manner, at last overcame the difficulty; and so from that time all kept Easter together, and adopted the same tonsure, and agreed as to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. This was a much happier condition of things than when people anxious to be good and do good could not agree about details.

But Cuthbert thought his life too easy!

Look for Bamborough on the Northumbrian coast.

There, opposite to it, you will find the Farne Islands, about two miles from the coast.

On one of these he now went to live quite alone, and many people came to see him and be blessed by him; and they marvelled at his saintliness. He had arranged his humble cell with a high mound of earth round it, so that he could see nothing from it but the sky, which he loved to gaze at and think of heaven.

He had no companions but the sea-birds. These were eider-ducks, and they are still called St. Cuthbert's ducks. Figures of these birds were worked in gold on the vestments in which the saint was buried.

He was in 685 chosen to be Bishop of Hexham. After much persuasion he consented; but the Bishop of Lindisfarne, knowing that Cuthbert would rather be there in his old home, offered to go to Hexham instead; so they exchanged.

I am sure I need not tell you how very hard he worked. But after two years he felt the end of life was drawing near, so he gave up his bishopric and returned to his peaceful island, whence his devoted soul went up to God.

Perhaps some day you will go to Farne and pick up what are called St. Cuthbert's beads.

There are marvellous stories told about St. Cuthbert, but they are mostly legends. Perhaps I shall be able to tell you some in another book. Bede tells us that once, being hungry, and having no food, he saw an eagle flying, and told his companion to follow it. This he did, and returned with a large fish which the eagle had caught in the river.

St. Cuthbert would not deprive the eagle of his dinner, so he cut it in half, and sent the other half back to the eagle.

You will read more about this saint in time.

Now for some more contemporaries.

## CHAPTER XXII

### SIX FAMOUS MEN

YOU remember that it was at the house of Earconwald, Bishop of London, that the two great Churchmen, Archbishop Theodore and Bishop Wilfrid, were reconciled.

This Bishop of London was a most saintly man, and did many good deeds; but I will only give you that one occasion in his life to think about. I am sure you will agree with me that it was a great occasion.

The strife between these two men who did so much for our dear Church in England was a great breach of Christian love, and likely to do much harm. Some beautiful words of our Lord come into our minds as we think of Earconwald: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Earconwald died in 693, three years after the death of Theodore. He founded two famous monasteries, one at Chertsey, in Surrey, the other at Barking, in Essex.

Now I must tell you about another great man, named Benedict Biscop.

He was a Northumbrian of noble birth, and when

he was twenty-five years of age he wished earnestly to devote himself to the religious life; and he went to Rome, taking Wilfrid, fresh from his studies at Canterbury, with him. This was in 653, two years after the death of St. Aidan.

Rome, with its beautiful churches, its music, its services, all of the best that could be offered in the worship of God, made a very great impression on these two friends.

As you have read, St. Wilfrid was ever afterwards loyal to a fault to the Rome he first saw when a young man; and Benedict Biscop was equally devoted; but their lives did not run in the same lines. Wilfrid's task was to convert, to stir up, to oversee; to wage war in what he deemed the cause of right. Benedict Biscop's was a more peaceful life. He was so enthusiastic about all he had seen in the wonderful city, that he was most anxious to go again and take King Oswy's son with him, but the prince could not be spared.

After waiting a long time, Biscop felt that Rome was pulling at his heart-strings, so he went alone in 665, the year after the Council of Whitby.

Afterwards he went to the monastery at Lerins, and in due time he took the vows and became a monk.

When Theodore came to England with his learned friend Hadrian, Benedict Biscop accompanied them. He was of great use to Theodore, because, being English, he knew the customs of the country as well as the language.

He spent two years in Kent; and then made a third journey to Rome. On his return, Egfrid, the

same king of Northumbria who had banished Wilfrid, was so much pleased with the books and other treasures Biscop had brought from Rome that he gave him some land on the north side of the river Wear on which to build a monastery. This was in 674, when Wilfrid was still at York.

It must have been delightful for the two friends to work together.

Now at that time the English had very little skill in building churches. They might make them strong, but they were rough and clumsy. But Biscop and Wilfrid had seen better things in France. So Benedict sent to that country for masons, who worked so well and so quickly that the monastery at Wearmouth was built in a marvellously short time, scarcely a year.

Wilfrid was the first to have glass windows in England. He had had them placed both at York and Ripon in the cathedrals. But now Biscop sent to France for workers in glass to teach the English the art of making it.

A fourth time he went to Rome. He brought back with him John the Chanter to teach the English really good church music. He also brought many books and pictures from which to teach the people.

In those days most of the people were unable to read. But if the priest who taught them showed them a picture of the Good Shepherd with His flock, or the story of the Prodigal Son, above all of the Birth of our Lord at Bethlehem, or of His Crucifixion, and told them all about it as he went on, you can understand the pictures would help them wonderfully.

We need teaching by the eye as well as by the ear, and we can learn a great deal from the beautiful painted windows in church, if only we think about them as we look.

Cannot you see in your mind's eye the energetic abbot, Benedict Biscop, directing the masons, seeing that everything was done in order, suggesting what he thought made most for reverence, watching the stones rise into a fair and goodly structure? And perhaps while thus busy, up would ride Bishop Wilfrid to see how everything was going on, examining all the details with well-trained and critical eye, encouraging the good abbot with his eager sympathy and warm approval.

Many must have been the meetings by the riverside between the friends; and how great would be their joy when all was completed!

This was about the time when St. Cuthbert retired to the little isle of Farne to live there his hermit's life. How different were the three holy men! and yet they were one in their desire to do all to the glory of God.

Egfrid was so charmed with the monastery at Wearmouth, which was dedicated to St. Peter, that he gave to Abbot Biscop some more land at Jarrow on the Tyne, to build another monastery, dedicated to St. Paul. In 682 twenty-two brethren, with Ceolfrid as abbot, left Wearmouth for Jarrow.

The sister monasteries grew and prospered; in fact, they were considered as one, for Bede speaks of "the monastery of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow."

For the fifth time Biscop went to Rome, in search of books and manuscripts. He returned to a saddened home.

King Egfrid had been slain in battle, and so severely had a terrible sickness visited the two monasteries, that at Jarrow only Ceolfrid and a little boy were left to sing the daily offices.

Not long afterwards Abbot Biscop became ill, and lingered three years quite helpless, but always patient and bright. He was at Wearmouth, where his friend Sigfrid was ill too. Bede tells us how Sigfrid was carried in his couch to Biscop's cell and laid down on his friend's bed; and how their heads were brought together that they might kiss each other.

Benedict Biscop died in 690, and you will remember that it was in the same year that the soul of the great Archbishop Theodore went home to God.

Another famous man, made Bishop of Hexham in the year St. Cuthbert died, was St. John of Beverley.

He was of noble birth, and was educated at Canterbury under Theodore. Afterwards he was a monk at St. Hilda's abbey of Whitby, then Bishop of Hexham, and afterwards Bishop of York.

He is always known as St. John of Beverley, because at that place he founded a very famous monastery.

He worked hard for thirty-three years as bishop, and then retired to his monastery at Beverley, where he died in 721.

We must not forget the beautiful story of one who was contemporary with the good Abbot Biscop

of Wearmouth, Cædmon, a cowherd at Whitby Abbey.

But first I must explain to you that the monks were not all priests; some were lay brothers. *Lay* is a word derived from the Latin, and means *the people*; perhaps it will make it clearer if I say the people who are not clergy. You will often hear of the clergy and laity: and the word *laity* means all the people who are not clergymen. A lay brother was one who had taken a monk's vows, but had not been ordained to any holy office; the lay brothers were not deacons or priests.

In monasteries, though all monks took part in certain manual tasks, the lay brothers had more of these to do than the priests, who had their own special work.

Cædmon used to grieve over not being able to teach or to help people: his estate was low, he felt of no use. But God had compassion on him, and suddenly he found he was able to compose very beautiful poetry.

He was the first English poet of whom we read, and his great gift was entirely dedicated to the glory of God. There is so much that reads like legend in the beautiful story of how he became a poet, that I must not tell it to you as history. You must read it for yourself by and by.

One great man in those days was Aldhelm. He was abbot of Malmesbury, in that part of Wessex we now call Wiltshire, and afterwards he was Bishop of Sherborne, in Dorset. There is no see of Sherborne now, though once it was very important.

St. Aldhelm was educated first at Malmesbury and afterwards at Canterbury. Archbishop Theodore and Hadrian were at Canterbury then, and, as you know, both were great promoters of learning. It was a great advantage to be taught in a school over which two such men presided.

Aldhelm was of royal descent, and had great influence with Ina, king of Wessex. He was a great lover of church music, and most energetic in church building.

We are told that as he went about Wessex he would sing to the people, and they were so charmed with his singing that they listened willingly when afterwards he began to teach them.

Do you think these abbots of old thought too much about music as an aid to worship?

Surely not.

We know from the Book of the Revelation how great a part music will have in the worship of Heaven; and we know too that a choir of angels heralded the birth of our Saviour Christ at Bethlehem.

“ Still, through the cloven skies they come  
 With peaceful wings unfurled;  
 And still their heavenly music floats  
 O'er all the weary world;  
 Above its sad and lowly plains  
 They bend on heavenly wing,  
 And ever o'er its Babel-sounds  
 The blessed angels sing.

O Prince of Peace, Thou knowest well  
 This weary world below;  
 Thou seest how men climb the way  
 With painful steps and slow.

Oh ! still the jarring sounds of earth  
That round the pathway ring,  
And bid the toilers rest a while  
To hear the angels sing !”

That is a Christmas hymn, you will say. And so it is. But I am quite sure if all the year round we were to obey the Psalmist and “sing, rejoice, and give thanks,” we should be much more likely to hear the angels sing than if we just forget there are such beings as angels, who are always waiting to bear our praises up to heaven.

St. Chad was not at all surprised to hear their sweet music, and why should we be ? that is, if we are always trying to lead lives pleasing to Christ ; if we are unselfish, truthful, patient, brave, and tender-hearted.

At any rate, if we cannot hear the angels sing now, we can remember the sweet song they sang that first Christmas Eve ; and we can try our best to sing well and heartily, so as to be able to join with them in the courts above.

And I am sure you will agree with me that St. Aldhelm’s singing did a good work, inasmuch as it prepared the way for the Gospel of Christ.

One of the greatest things that Aldhelm did was the bringing over many of the old British Church in South Wales, Devon, and Cornwall to accept the use of the English Church about Easter and the tonsure and the other points of difference.

To unite even a remnant of the old faithful British Church to the young and growing Church of England was a grand work. This we owe to St.

Aldhelm, as well as many beautiful churches in the West Country which he caused to be built. He died in 709.

And now for the last of our six famous men.

You remember how Bishop Wilfrid, on his way to Rome in 678, was wrecked on the shores of Frisia, and that he spent his time in converting the Frisians. It is quite certain that he would not forget the converts he had been allowed to make, but would pray for them and speak of them and interest others in them.

Knowing this, we are not surprised to find that Willibrod, a monk who had been educated at Ripon, went out in 690 as missionary to complete the work in Frisia which his beloved bishop, Wilfrid, had begun.

In 693 he was consecrated Archbishop of the Frisians; and proved himself a worthy disciple of our great missionary bishop, St. Wilfrid.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE VENERABLE BEDE

AND now we come to that saintly and learned man without whom we should never have known the early history of our Church, and of the many saints and famous men whose names you know now, and must never forget, for they are the stones of which our dear Church of England was built.

You remember how, when that terrible sickness had visited the sister monasteries built by Benedict Biscop, that at Jarrow only the Abbot Ceolfrid and one little boy were left to sing the services. Some think that little boy was Bede himself. It would be nice to know this, but we cannot be sure.

There is much we do know, which he tells us himself in the story of his life and works.

No words of mine could be as good as his own, so I will copy what he says himself.

“Thus much of the ecclesiastical history of Britain, and more especially of the English nation, as far as I could learn either from the writings of the ancients, or the tradition of our ancestors, or of my own knowledge, has, with the help of God, been digested by me. Bede, the servant of God, and priest of the monastery of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul,

which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow; who being born in the territory of that same monastery, was given, at seven years of age, to be educated by the most reverend Abbot Benedict, and afterwards by Ceolfrid; and spending all the remaining time of my life in their monastery, I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture, and amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing. In the nineteenth year of my age, I received deacon's orders; in the thirtieth, those of the priesthood,—both of them by the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John, and by order of the Abbot Ceolfrid. From which time, till the fifty-ninth year of my age, I have made it my business, for the use of me and mine, to compile out of the works of the venerable Fathers, and to interpret and explain according to their meaning these following pieces."

Here follows a very long list of books. Great part of the Old Testament, and much of the New. Histories of the saints; the Life of St. Cuthbert, in prose and verse; books on science and poetry; a book of hymns; and very many others. Above all, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*.

It was written in five books, and when he had finished it he wrote this beautiful prayer:

"And now, I beseech Thee, good Jesus, that to whom Thou hast graciously granted sweetly to partake of the words of Thy wisdom and knowledge, Thou wilt also vouchsafe that he may some time or other come to Thee, the fountain of all wisdom, and

always appear before Thy face, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen!"

I want you quite to understand where the birth-place of Bede really was.

If you look at the map you will see the two rivers Wear and Tyne, both of which fall into the North Sea.

They are about five miles apart. The land or territory belonging to the two monasteries was near the coast, between the two. Jarrow, on the Tyne, was on the north; Wearmouth, on the Wear, was on the south. Five miles of land between the two monasteries was their territory, and it was here, about 677, that Bede was born.

At this time Wilfrid was Bishop of York. It was in the last quarter of a most famous century that he was born, and of that century he has left us a record more valuable than I can say.

He must have been a very ardent student; and we know from others how good and holy he was. It was quite unusual to ordain any one as deacon as young as nineteen, so that he must in wisdom have been in advance of his years.

All his life long Bede worked for the glory of God, and the good of the Church. He took part at Jarrow in the duties which the brethren had to perform; and occasionally he had to leave the monastery when he was summoned to the courts of kings. But the greater part of his time was devoted to religious duties and his literary work.

There in the quiet monastery in the scriptorium—the writing-room—he would dictate to his students or

scribes, or sometimes write himself the books which have made his name so famous and which have taught us so much.

Those books were not written on paper, as ours generally are, but on parchment, and in a most neat and beautiful hand.

Printing was not invented till 1440, more than seven centuries later; so that it is quite wonderful that so many books should have been written in the lifetime, and that not a very long lifetime, of one man.

Bede knew personally many of the holy men about whom he wrote. He lived in the monastery founded by Benedict Biscop, and he was ordained both deacon and priest by St. John of Beverley. He knew those who had known others, so that his history is entirely to be relied upon; and when you are older I hope you will delight in it.

Bede's life was particularly holy and good, and the end came one lovely Ascension Day, the 26th of May 735.

He had never been strong, and for several weeks he had been ill and suffering, and those who were with him saw his little strength grow less and less.

But he had been translating the Gospel of St. John, and the monk who was transcribing it for him, seeing that he could not live, said to him: "There is still a chapter wanting; but it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer."

But Bede, wishing with all his heart to finish the Gospel of the great Apostle of Love, roused himself, and bade the monk take his pen and write quickly.

The tears of his companions fell thick and fast as

they saw how their beloved master nerved himself for his last task.

When it was nearly done, and his strength seemed failing—

“There is but one sentence more, dear master,” said the monk.

“Write it quickly,” said Bede, with a great effort.

A few more moments, and the monk said, amidst his tears, “It is finished now,” as he laid down his pen.

“Yes,” replied Bede; “all is finished now.” Then, turning his head towards the desk in his cell where he was wont to pray, he clasped his hands and said—

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!”—

And so, with the words of thanksgiving on his lips, the spirit of the holy man went home to God.

It was a beautiful ending to a beautiful life,—the life of one who had consecrated all his talents to God’s service; who had lived as becomes the “servant of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

All that was earthly of their beloved master the monks laid to rest in his beloved church at Jarrow. Afterwards his tomb was made in Durham Cathedral, where you may read the inscription which tells of him, and may give thanks to God for him and for his work.

The Venerable Bede died in 735. He had lived in stirring times. He was not by many years in advance of those exciting scenes and events which make the sixth and seventh centuries the most

intensely interesting period of time between the Conquest of Britain by Julius Cæsar and that later Conquest by William the Norman.

We will go back now and recall some of the events ; and I think it will help you if you will learn them by heart.

You must remember that the last of all the kingdoms founded by the Anglo-Saxons was that of the Angles in Northumbria in 547.

Now follow the events we must remember.

St. Columba, the large-hearted, splendid missionary from Ireland, founded the monastery in Iona in 563.

At the time of St. Columba's death, Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory from Rome, was converting the people of Kent in 597. The death of the great Apostle of the North was followed by the mission of the Apostle of Kent.

A second band of missionaries was sent from Rome by Pope Gregory in 601.

Augustine met the British bishops, but failed to win them over in 603.

The see of London, the capital of Essex, or East Saxons, was revived, and that of Rochester in Kent was founded in the year 604. In the same year St. Augustine died. He was the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mellitus was Bishop of London. He was banished in 616.

Paulinus, who had come to England with the second band of Roman missionaries, planted the Church in Northumbria in 627, and was Bishop of York.

Archbishop Honorius sent to East Anglia, Felix, a Burgundian monk. He with Fursey, a monk from Ireland, converted East Anglia in 631. St. Felix was the first Bishop of Dunwich.

Edwin, king of Northumbria, was killed by Penda, king of Mercia, at Hatfield; and Paulinus took the widowed Queen Ethelburga and her children back to Kent. Paulinus was afterwards Bishop of Rochester.

Birinus, an Italian priest, asked the Pope to send him on a mission to the English. He was the Apostle of Wessex, and began his work there in 634.

Oswald, king of Northumbria, sent to Iona for a missionary to carry on the work in Northumbria begun by Paulinus. St. Aidan obeyed the call, and founded a monastery at Lindisfarne in 635.

King Oswald was slain by Penda at Maserfield in 642.

Aidan, the first saint of Lindisfarne, died in 651.

Penda was killed in battle in 655. His own deathblow being also the deathblow of paganism. Mercia was now converted by a mission from Lindisfarne. Diuma was the first Bishop of Mercia.

St. Hilda was the first and most famous abbess of Whitby, in 657.

The Council of Whitby, which decided in favour of the Roman method of keeping Easter, and other customs, was held in 664.

St. Chad was consecrated Bishop of York in the absence of Wilfrid. British bishops assisted at his consecration in 666.

Theodore of Tarsus was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 668.

Wilfrid took his own place as Bishop of York, and Chad was translated to Lichfield in 669.

A Synod, or Church Council, was held at Hertford. The first Synod of the English Church in 673. In this year St. Etheldreda founded a monastery at Ely.

Benedict Biscop founded the monastery of Wearmouth in 674.

Bede, the Church historian, born in 677.

Wilfrid appealed to Rome on the division of his diocese by Theodore in 678. On his way to Rome he converted the people of Frisia.

The monastery of Jarrow, five miles north from that of Wearmouth, was founded by Benedict Biscop in 682.

Wilfrid, while banished from Northumbria, evangelised Sussex in 684.

The saintly Cuthbert, abbot of Lindisfarne, was consecrated bishop in 685.

St. John of Beverley was made Bishop of Hexham in the year St. Cuthbert died, 687. It was in this year that Theodore and Wilfrid were reconciled, at the house of Earconwald, Bishop of London.

Aldhelm was consecrated Bishop of Sherborne, in Wessex, in the year Archbishop Theodore died, 690.

Willibrod, from St. Wilfrid's abbey of Ripon, went to complete the conversion of Frisia in 696.

Truly this was a most wonderful century. It stands alone in the history of our Church; and we do well to remember those who lived and died in it, for they were the makers of the Church of England.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SOME MISSIONARY BISHOPS

**I**N telling the story of Bede's life-work and of his death, we went thirty-five years forward into the eighth century. Now we must go back a little.

You remember that Theodore and his friend Hadrian were both very learned men. Their school at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, was very famous, and a taste for learning had begun to spread. Not only in Kent, but in the old Roman city of York, under Bosa, and at Malmesbury, under Aldhelm, monasteries were becoming centres of learning and education; while Jarrow produced the greatest scholar of the time.

What different kinds of good and great men there were!

There was Adamnan, who was abbot of Iona in 703, and who wrote the *Life of St. Columba*.

Then there was St. Guthlac, whose story I must tell you. He was one of those who thought he could serve God better quite away from the tumult of the world.

He was at the court of a certain king of Mercia, and felt rightly displeased at the ill-conduct of many around him. So he determined to leave; and with one servant he made his way into the very heart of

the East Anglian fens, just where Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, and Lincolnshire meet.

Here in the swampy ground, with meres full of wild-fowl, and the rustling of reeds and rushes everywhere; with ague and rheumatism lying in wait for him, he built a little oratory or place of prayer.

It was very difficult in that spongy ground to build anything, as there was no solid earth for a foundation. He had all sorts of hindrances, and was tempted to despair over and over again.

But he succeeded at last, and here in his little hut of osier and mud the hermit dwelt.

Very many sad and sinful people came to him with their burdens, and he told them of Christ who had borne their sins for them on the Cross, and how He had bidden all weary souls to come to Him.

It was only a little hut in a wilderness of fen; very dreary, for the only sounds were the cries of the mere-fowl, the whistling of the wind among the sedges, or the splash of water as some boat plied its cautious way among the pools and streams to where St. Guthlac dwelt, waiting to help all who came to him for comfort.

In the summer days, with the blue sky above him, with gorgeous dragon-flies and lovely swallow-tail butterflies skimming lightly over the silent pools, and the bittern boomed its solemn cry; in the twilight after sunset, when the frogs croaked in chorus like corn-crakes in a stubble field, St. Guthlac prayed and gave thanks to God.

Not only then, but in the quiet nights when the moonlight or the starlight quivered on the rippling





CROWLAND ABBEY

meres ; or on winter days, when all the waste of waters was a clear, steely blue, and the fluffy seeds of the sedges gleamed silver in the low December sun, St. Guthlac worshipped the Great Father in heaven from whom cometh every good and perfect gift which filled his heart with joy and thankfulness. But he thanked God too when the wintry winds blew cold and keen across the dreary waste, or the snow showers and the sleet and rain drove against his little mud cabin ; all came of God, and he loved Him through all.

But he must have felt lonely, you think ?

Yes, dear children, it is not given to many of us to be able to rejoice in absolute loneliness. But there were some in those days, and there are some in our own, who are so full of love to God that they need no other love, no other companion.

It is quite beyond most of us, nor would it be wise for many to retire from the world so completely ; but those who have done so, and who love God enough to wish to live such lives, help on the strugglers by their constant prayers ; and we may be quite sure our Lord fills them with such peace and joy that they do not feel lonely, even when most alone.

Later on you will, I hope, read the legend of good St. Guthlac, and also the story of Hereward the Wake and the monks of Crowland.

For after St. Guthlac's death, those who loved him drained the fen, and founded there in his memory a famous monastery, the ruins of which are beautiful even to this day.

But though there were some saints who lived quite

apart from the world, such as St. Etheldreda at Ely, St. Cuthbert at Farne, and St. Guthlac at Crowland, very many more lived an active life in the world, going about from place to place as I have told you. But one and all were working for Christ their Master in the great harvest field of souls.

Not long after Willibrod went to Frisia, Bishop Wilfrid, during his banishment in Mercia, consecrated Swidbert, the first English missionary bishop sent out to the heathen tribes.

He joined Willibrod, and the two did a splendid work. Pepin d'Heristal, Duke of the Franks, encouraged their mission, which grew, as all good things grow, under the powerful Hand of God.

I wonder if you will ever go to Crediton, in Devonshire. If so, you will notice the beautiful pulpit in the church which was given in memory of two martyr bishops: one, St. Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, who was put to death in 755; the other, a bishop of the nineteenth century, the saintly John Coleridge Patteson, who was martyred in one of the islands of the Melanesian mission in the far-off Southern seas.

Both were Devonshire men. St. Boniface, whose real name was Winfrid, was born at Crediton in 680.

As he grew up to know the love of Christ for sinful men, he longed to be a missionary, and in 716 he went to Frisia to join Willibrod.

At that time the chiefs of the pagans in Frisia would not let him teach; so he returned to England. After a few months spent in his English monastery,

Brightwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his own bishop, Daniel, sent Boniface to Rome; and Pope Gregory II. gave him the task of converting Germany.

Boniface was so true a missionary that he drew others to help him, and he laboured not only in Germany, but in parts of France. In 796 he was made Archbishop of Mentz, on the Rhine.

On Whitsun Eve in 755, he and Eoban, Bishop of Utrecht, who had helped him in his work, were in Frisia. There was to be a confirmation, and the archbishop was preparing for it when he and Bishop Eoban, with fifty others, were cruelly massacred, and so won the Martyrs' Crown.

The beautiful church of Crediton and the massive square-pillared cathedral of Mentz are both built of soft-tinted red sandstone. Far apart they stand, divided by many miles of land and sea, yet the memory of our first great Devonshire martyr bishop is enshrined in each. We cannot look upon those churches, we cannot read of the saintly missionary England gave to Germany, without remembering the words:

“The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.”

“The Son of God goes forth to war,  
A kingly crown to gain;  
His blood-red banner streams afar,  
Who follows in His train?

A noble army, men and boys,  
The matron and the maid,  
Around the Saviour's Throne rejoice,  
In robes of light array'd.

They climb'd the steep ascent of heav'n,  
Through peril, toil, and pain ;  
O God, to us may grace be given  
To follow in their train."

Swidbert went to his rest before Willibrod, who died in 739. St. Boniface was put to death in 755. They were three great and famous missionaries, all Englishmen brave and true; above all were they loyal servants of Christ.

You have seen how in the early days of our Church's history, first the Celtic saints, the Irish and those in Wales, were missionaries.

An abbot from one of the monasteries would take with him twelve monks, thus following the example of our Lord and His twelve apostles; and they planted a mission station where they saw the need was greatest. Their little, unpretending monastery was the centre of spiritual life for that district. Everywhere they taught and tried to bring the people into the fold of Christ.

Then after a while, their ranks swelled by their converts, another abbot would go forth with twelve other monks and establish a mission station somewhere else.

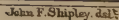
This was what St. Columba did, this is what had been done in Wales long before St. Augustine landed at Ebbsfleet. This is very much the way in which our own missionaries work now in Central Africa, and in other far-off countries, where the first thing is to get hold of the people by winning their hearts.

But when all of our country was Christian, then it was necessary to act differently. The foundations



with the number of

FROM A.D. 735 - 901.



had been grandly and strongly laid in marvellous self-devotion, unbounded self-sacrifice, in love, the strength of which helped those early missionaries to endure all things for the sake of Christ. But now it was important to build up what had been so devotedly begun.

Here, we must always gratefully remember, came in the aid of Rome. In that wonderful century following the coming of the Roman mission, the work of building up the Church went steadily on; till in the days of Bede we find services well ordered, church music cultivated, rules for clergy and laity made and kept, learning encouraged, and, above all things, a holy life enforced.

If some of the fervour of the early missionaries seemed to have died with them, yet we know how it burned in the hearts of Bishop Wilfrid and his disciple Willibrod, in Swidbert, and in Boniface.

And now that the excitement and wonder attending the planting of the Church in England was subsiding, and the people were growing accustomed to the Faith of which their forefathers had never heard, the danger was lest, in the quiet, humdrum lives of most men and women, they should grow slothful and careless and forget how great things had been done for them, and that religion is not for one century only, but for ever; and that a good beginning is not everything: we must persevere in our pilgrimage if we wish at last to reach the Promised Land.

So you can see that it was the duty of all loyal Churchmen to put into practice what the Church was now daily teaching; and this quiet pursuit of holiness

in habitual well-doing was, in some ways, far less easy than was the life of the converts in the old missionary days.

How the people stood the test I must tell you in another chapter.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THREATENING CLOUDS

**I**N the year before the death of the Venerable Bede, a very good man named Egbert was consecrated Archbishop of York.

Formerly this honour had belonged to Canterbury alone. Pope Gregory the Great had wished Paulinus to be Archbishop of York; but the troubles in Northumbria came so swiftly, and Paulinus had to return to Kent, so that Gregory's wish had not been carried out.

But now the Pope sent Egbert the pall, which is, as you know, a special vestment, made of wool, which only an archbishop could wear. So now there were two archbishops: one to rule the northern province of England, the other to govern the south.

Not long before his death, Bede had written to Egbert, Archbishop of York, complaining that the monks were falling away from their first saintliness, and that the people generally were not leading such good lives as formerly.

There was some truth in this sad statement; but still the Church grew and flourished, becoming a great power for good in the land, like leaven working in an evil world.

Egbert of York was not only good and wise, but very learned. He had also the advantage of being related to both the kings of Northumbria in whose reigns he lived.

Eadbert, who succeeded to the throne in 738, was his brother, and he and the archbishop worked so well together that Northumbria was splendidly governed, both in Church and State.

The famous school at York, founded by Archbishop Egbert, soon rivalled that of Canterbury. Albert, a very learned monk, was master of this school; and one of his pupils, Alcuin, was the greatest scholar, after Bede, that England had before the Norman Conquest.

He was born in the very year that Bede died, in 735. After his course of education was finished, he became master of the Cathedral School at York, his native city, and remained there till after the death of his old master, Albert, who had succeeded Egbert as Archbishop of York. Then he was on his way to Rome, when he met Charlemagne, the powerful Emperor of the Franks.

Charlemagne was so struck with Alcuin's learning and wisdom that he invited him to his court, and there he spent the remainder of his life; only returning to his native land for rare visits.

This was, in one sense, a great loss to us. But through him the reputation of England for learning spread over Europe; and our little island was revered as the source of the light of knowledge which, kindled in the school at York, now shone brilliantly far and wide.

Alcquin died in 804.

But clouds were rising, and dark days were soon to come.

You know how nobly Northumbria had held her own, both as a great centre of Church life and as an immense national power; perhaps because the kings had for a long time been on the side of what was good.

But in the time of Archbishop Egbert its civil power had begun to decline, as the great kingdom of Mercia asserted itself more and more.

Now I am sorry to say that two of the most powerful kings of Mercia, who reigned in succession, Ethelbald and Offa, were anything but good men; and, of course, as they were very powerful, they did a great deal of harm.

What made it worse was that they always professed to uphold the Church: because if we profess to follow Christ, and then contradict our profession by our conduct, it does untold harm.

Ethelbald of Mercia, when quite young, had been for some time with good St. Guthlac at Crowland; and at his death he helped to found the monastery there. We must hope that the good saint's teaching had not been in vain, for we are told that later in his life Ethelbald repented of his sins.

But it always seems to me so very sad to spend our fresh, young days in the service of sin; and then, when we are tired of it all, to offer the remainder to God. If you wished to give some lovely flowers to your mother or a friend, you would not wait till they were brown and withered, you would offer them

when freshly gathered, in all their unspoilt beauty. Our very best is what we should give to God; life, youth, health, strength, all our powers of mind and body should be a living sacrifice to Him all our days.

Give God thy youth—the early dawn  
Of life's short changeable day,  
When, thorns and briars all unknown,  
Sweet flowers bestrew thy way;  
With warm affections, faith untried,  
High hopes, and trust in truth,  
With brightness flung around thy path,  
Oh, give to God thy youth!  
And thou shalt find, when youth is o'er,  
Life's gates are wide unroll'd,  
And through its dazzling, wildering maze  
God will a path unfold:  
Will give thee strength for every day,  
Strong comfort in distress,  
And prove Himself in all thy need  
Omnipotent to bless.

It was because Ethelbald not only did wrong himself, but allowed it in others, that the Council of Cloveshoo was held in 747, at which canons were passed enforcing a stricter life on the clergy, and making rules for the monasteries.

King Ethelbald was present at this Council, which was presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and we may hope it had some effect upon his after-life. He died in 756.

He was succeeded by Offa, who was, perhaps, a better man, but he caused a great deal of disturbance in the Church.

I have told you that Northumbria's power as a kingdom had for some time been on the wane, and

that now Mercia was by far the most important of the seven kingdoms of England.

Now Offa was jealous of both Canterbury and York. He thought that if Kent and Northumbria had each an archbishop, surely his great and powerful kingdom of Mercia ought to have one too.

So first he obtained permission of all the Mercian bishops to have an archbishop over them at Lichfield; and then he sent to the Pope, Adrian II., to ask him to send the new archbishop the pall.

But the Pope would not do this without some great return; and in yielding to the Pope, Offa did great harm to the English Church. He spent a great deal of money in order to please the Pope, and actually allowed him to send two legates, or messengers, to England to settle the affairs of our Church.

This was a most unwise as well as unpatriotic step. For now the Pope could maintain he had a right to interfere with our Church; and that interference led to most disastrous results in after years.

Then in 787 Offa summoned Jaenbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, a rather weak sort of man, to a Council at Chelsea. Here the matter was settled. The southern province was divided. All the Church property which Canterbury held in Mercia was to be given up to the see of Lichfield, and Canterbury was shorn of its glory, and had to yield the first place to Lichfield.

So now there were three archbishops in England.

But when Offa was dead, his son Kenwulf felt that his father had made a mistake; and the archbishopric of Lichfield was done away with by the

decision of two Councils, held at Cloveshoo in 800 and 803.

You will often hear Offa's name. It was he who founded St. Alban's Abbey on the site of the little monastery founded in memory of Britain's first martyr. He also founded the abbey of Bardney in Lincolnshire. This was a very famous abbey, and within it was, for a long time, the tomb of Oswald, the good Northumbrian king, the friend of Aidan and the great champion of the Faith.

You remember how he was killed by Penda at Maserfield.

Do you wonder where that place is?

You will not find it on a modern map, but it is generally supposed to be near Oswestry in Shropshire, —Oswald's Tree.

At first his body was buried at Lindisfarne, till his niece Osthryd removed it to Bardney. It was again moved, in the tenth century, and entombed at Gloucester.

St. Oswald's head, which Penda had cut off, was, many years later, placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin.

If you ever see a painted window in a church dedicated to St. Cuthbert, I think you will find he is depicted holding in his hand a crowned head; and you will know it is St. Oswald's.

One word more about Offa. He it was who caused money to be collected to pay the expenses of pilgrims to Rome, and also to go to support the English school there which had been founded by Ina, king of Wessex, the king who upheld the work of Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne. This money collected was

called Peter's Pence, because the collection was made on the first of August, one of the days dedicated to St. Peter.

Offa also made what was called a gift of tithes to the Pope, which still further strengthened the claims which the Popes had begun to lay upon our Church.

On the whole, though Offa did some good work for the English Church, I think he also did some that was very bad.

There is one thing I want you to specially notice, which is, that though the Pope was foolishly allowed to interfere in our Church affairs, still those affairs were not settled by him, but by Councils or Synods of our own English Church.

It is necessary to remember this, because the Church of England had not yet lost her independence by bowing to the authority of a foreign power.

But the eighth century was closing in gloom. Some people thought that God sent an enemy to punish the English because they had grown so careless. This we cannot say, for we have no right to judge. But the fact remains that a great and terrible struggle was before the country in the invasion of the Northmen.

The Northmen, or Danes, were often called the Sea Kings, because their ships were everywhere on the Northern seas.

They were great pirates or sea robbers, claiming as their own all they found on the wide ocean.

They were for many long years the terror of England, of Ireland, and of Northern France. Their great chief Rollo conquered part of the north of

France; but in the Normans of a later day you would not recognise these freebooters, these pirates, who settled in what was then and still is called Normandy after them.

These sea kings came from Norway and Sweden as well as Denmark; but they are usually spoken of in history as either the Northmen or the Danes.

Now I must tell you the sad story of the Danes at Lindisfarne.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE DANES AT LINDISFARNE

FROM fiords all gleaming  
In sunlight and moonlight :  
Rose-red with aurora  
In long nights of winter ;  
Where in summer the great sun,  
The red sun sets never ;  
Where sea-calf and walrus  
Bathe in the still waters,  
Where sea-fowl are wheeling  
In eddies and screaming  
When midwinter darkness  
Broods low o'er the ocean ;  
Where Odin the war-god,  
The god of the Northmen,  
In anger is reigning,  
Came Sea Kings to England ;  
    The strong, hardy Sea Kings,  
    The cruel, fierce Sea Kings,  
        To England, to conquer.

From glare of the iceberg,  
With eyes swift as eagles  
To swoop on their quarry ;  
Ice breath of the north wind  
Salt in their nostrils.  
The sound of the thunder  
Of Thor in his anger  
Their spirits possessing :  
With long hair all storm-tossed ;  
With strange, pagan shoutings,  
With weapons of warfare,  
Of fire and bloodshed,

They came—those grim Sea Kings,  
The strong, hardy Sea Kings,  
The cruel, fierce Sea Kings,  
To England, to conquer.

What a terrible horde to swoop down on peaceful Lindisfarne!

You remember that St. Cuthbert died on his lonely island of Farne in 687. A storm had raged for five days and nights, but at last the abbot of Lindisfarne, with some of the monks, crossed over to Farne to see their beloved master.

He was dying when they arrived, and only Herefred, the abbot, went into the cell. When at last the saint's pure spirit passed, the monks outside were chanting one of the Psalms for that evening's service, "O God, Thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad. O turn Thee unto us again. O be Thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man."

At the same time, in the monastery of Lindisfarne, the monks were chanting the same Psalm.

Suddenly across the sea they saw two lights flaring on the little island of Farne, a signal to them that their well-loved bishop had gone to his rest.

It was not strange that both at Farne and Lindisfarne they should be singing the same Psalms; because that is one of the great charms of our universal service or liturgy, that everywhere, almost at the same time, we are uniting with our brethren in the same words of prayer and praise.

"And surely in a world like this,  
So rife with woe, so scant of bliss,  
Where fondest hopes are often crossed,  
And fondest hearts are severed most,—

'Tis something that we kneel and pray  
With loved ones near and far away,  
One God, one faith, one hope, one care,  
One form of words, one hour of prayer."

It was not strange that at Farne and at Lindisfarne the same Psalms were being sung, but it does seem strange that it was *that* Psalm, for it seemed prophetic of what for many sad years befell the faithful monks at Lindisfarne.

It was in 794 that the Danes made their first descent upon Holy Island. The Northmen specially hated the Christian religion, because it had taken the place of the worship of their own false gods, who had also been the gods of the English in the olden days.

Lindisfarne was within easy reach, so they fell upon it, turned the monks out and robbed the monastery of all they could find, but this time they did not touch St. Cuthbert's tomb.

The Danes did not stay there, and before long the scattered monks were able to return to their beloved abbey.

But now for many years the monks never felt secure. Anxiously, with sinking hearts, did they watch the ships and boats of the Northmen, which were soon only too well known along the coast.

Many a tale of plunder and destruction reached them, so that they were never quite sure what terrible thing might not befall them next. And meanwhile very much was happening in the world outside.

All this time we have been reading of the Seven Kingdoms, the Heptarchy as it was called, which means a government of seven.

These kingdoms were, as you know, Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Wessex.

Kent, Essex, and Sussex were not very pushing or powerful kingdoms. But the other four had always contested for priority, that is, which kingdom should be chief.

While the terrible Penda of Mercia lived, we have seen how difficult it was for the other three to hold their own. Then the power of Northumbria passed over to Mercia, and finally, in 827, Egbert, king of Wessex, conquered all the rest and was made king of all England.

When any one wonders why Church people should think so much of the Church, and place it first, above the State, it is well to remember that long before the Seven Kingdoms of England were united and the State firmly settled, the Church of England had been established when Theodore was archbishop, more than a century earlier.

And long before that, the bishops and the kings had worked together. "Church and State" had no empty meaning in those far-off early days.

In a small island such as ours, with seven kings, most of them striving for the mastery, there could never have been much peace. But now, with one king supreme, the people might expect things to go smoothly in their own land, without fear of civil wars.

But now came the real invasion of the Northmen, and for more than forty-two years these terrible pagans were always coming down "like a wolf on

the fold," ravaging, burning, and destroying wherever they came.

Egbert had enough on his hands during his reign of eleven years. He was a good Churchman, and he and his son Ethelwulf made an alliance with the Archbishop of Canterbury, an alliance which certainly uttered no uncertain sound.

The archbishop promised, for himself, his Church, and his successors, unbroken friendship to the kings and their heirs; the king "giving assurance of protection, liberty of election, and peace."

Ethelwulf's great adviser and friend was St. Swithin, Bishop of Winchester.

Neither Egbert nor his four immediate successors could conquer the persistent Danes. They came not only in armies, as warriors, but with their wives and families; and having driven out the owners of houses and lands, they coolly took possession of them and settled down triumphant.

Everywhere rose up the smell of burning, the noise of battle, the weeping of mothers bereft of their children, the sad crying of the little ones left orphans and alone.

Well might they pray in their anguish, "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us!"

It was not till King Alfred's reign began, in 871, that much was done to really subdue the Danes.

But of all the adventures and fights and victories in Alfred's time you can read in your History of England.

Now for our dear Lindisfarne.

In 875, Eardulf, the Bishop of Lindisfarne, hearing

that the Danes were again approaching, told the monks that St. Cuthbert had left them directions that if ever heathens invaded Lindisfarne, the monks were to depart and seek another resting-place, carrying with them his bones, so that they might not be polluted by lying in pagan ground.

And now the time had come.

Sad at heart, the bishop and all the monks of Lindisfarne prepared to leave the sacred place, which had been the abode of light and truth ever since the time of good St. Aidan two hundred and forty years ago, the home which to them would ever be the dearest, best-loved place on earth.

With reverent hands they placed the bones of their saint, and also those of St. Aidan and St. Oswald, in a bier, and then set forth. And no doubt in their hearts the words of the Psalm were sounding mournfully: "O God, Thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad. O turn Thee unto us again. O be Thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man."

What a sad procession it was!

And now the fierce Danes poured out their fury on the monastery. The flames rose high, and blazed and seemed to die away, and flamed and blazed again, telling to Bamborough and all the places on the coast and far inland the woful story. And when the moon and stars again looked down upon the Holy Island, they shone upon a wreck, a smouldering heap of ashes. The glory of Lindisfarne had departed.

The monks, with their sacred burden at their head, moved on inland. They had with them, besides the

bones of their three great saints, the Lindisfarne Gospels. This was a very precious book. It had been written in honour of St. Cuthbert and other saints of the island by Eadfrith, abbot of Lindisfarne, probably soon after St. Cuthbert's death. It had been ornamented by Ethelwold, another bishop, and most beautifully bound by the hermit Bilfrith. It was a great treasure to the monks of Lindisfarne.

Now the monks thought they would find a safer abode in Ireland than in their own sadly devastated country. So they travelled westward, and at last set sail for the green island, which you know had once been called the Land of Saints, the land which gave us our St. Columba.

But a storm arose, and the precious book was swept overboard, and they were driven back to the English coast.

Half in hope and half in fear they sought their lost treasure upon the sand. And there, washed up by the waves, at last they found it, to their joy, uninjured, except for the stain of the sea water upon it. That stain can be seen upon it even now; for although it is so many centuries old, the book is not destroyed: it is preserved in the British Museum.

You may be quite sure the exiled monks were overjoyed to find their precious book. There was trouble enough in store without the sorrow of this loss.

They gave up the idea of going to Ireland, and wandered about for seven long, weary years, a sad and grave procession not of monks alone; brave

fighting laymen protected them, and whole families followed in the wake of St. Cuthbert's bier.

Sometimes they would stay for a little while in one place, but only for a short time—it was not safe to linger. From wandering among the Cheviot Hills and in Cumberland, they found once a temporary resting-place in St. Ninian's monastery at Witherne; but even here they were not allowed to rest.

How often must they have chanted that Psalm of solemn memory, and felt how true it was!

At the end of seven years they came to Craik, a place in Yorkshire, which at first seemed a little land of promise. But it was not safe to begin to build, for the Danes were harrying all the country, and the flames of burning churches and monasteries rose up towards heaven.

But at Craik they remained four months. Meanwhile the dark clouds lifted slightly, for Alfred, whose tact and wisdom were so great in his dealings with the Danes, had taken a step which, under the circumstances, was the best that could have been taken.

There was a certain Danish noble, named Guthred, who had been some time in bondage. Alfred now released him; and seeing in him the qualities of a ruler, he allowed him to be under-king of Northumbria.

Peace followed this arrangement; and the bishop and abbot and monks of Lindisfarne moved on with their precious burden to Chester-le-Street. Here they built a monastery, and nine bishops ruled thence in succession.





DURHAM CATHEDRAL

Again, after more than a hundred years, in 990, there came a rumour that the Danes were near.

Again a sad procession set forth with the bones of St. Cuthbert, to seek another refuge, which they found in St. Wilfrid's beloved abbey of Ripon.

But their exile this time was brief. The rumour proved false; and on their way back to Chester-le-Street they stopped, six miles off, at Durham, where once more the bones of their saint found rest, and the weary wanderings of the monks were ended.

In that lovely spot by the Wear, high up on the wooded cliff which overhangs the river, they built St. Cuthbert's shrine, where now stands the cathedral of Durham.

And yet once more were the bones of St. Cuthbert disturbed.

This was in 1069, when William the Conqueror, true descendant of his warlike ancestors, was carrying all before him in Yorkshire. The monks took the treasure they so jealously guarded once more to Lindisfarne, where it rested three months. It was then borne back to Durham, where, after so many wanderings, it has ever since remained.

This is a strange story, but it is as true as it is strange.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### EAST ANGLIA'S MARTYR KING

WE are obliged sometimes to look forward in our History, as in the story of the monks of Lindisfarne. It was necessary to follow them on their pilgrimage, and to tell the end of their wanderings, though in so doing we covered a period of about one hundred and fifty years.

But there is much yet to be told before we reach the Norman Conquest.

It was in 870, the year before Alfred the Great began his reign, that two events happened which we must not forget.

I hope you remember that when St. Paulinus came to the old Roman city of Lincoln, he converted and baptized Blecca, the chief man there at that time, and baptized others as well. Moreover, that in the little church within the Roman gate of Newport he consecrated Honorius, fifth Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lincoln had been a very famous place in old British and Roman days. It was still an important place in King Alfred's time. But it had no cathedral, nor was its bishop styled Bishop of Lincoln.

There is a place in the same county near the

Trent, ten miles from Lincoln, called Stow, whose church was really the Motherchurch of the diocese at that time. Be sure to remember this. The Motherchurch of the great see of Lindsey was Stow, near Gainsborough.

Naturally the part of England nearest the east coast suffered first from the Danes, after crossing the North Sea. They simply overran what is now the county of Lincoln. Within twelve miles of the coast there is scarcely a village whose name does not tell us the Danes had settled there.

We can generally tell whether the Danes had settled in a place by the ending of its name.

"Toft" and "by" are the most frequent of these terminations. And if you look at the map of England you will see, all down the coast of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, but especially in the latter county, that the Danes swept nearly all before them.

So we cannot wonder that they pushed on their furious way to Stow, and burnt and destroyed its monastery and church; and so utterly wasted it, that for years the bishopric of Lindsey was lost, merged in that of Dorchester, the Dorchester near Oxford.

If the name of a place ends in *ham*, or *stowe*, or *ton*, then you may be sure, as a rule, the Danes did not destroy it, though they may have done their best to do so. They did not settle at Stow, near Gainsborough, though they wreaked their vengeance on its church and monastery.

Again, if you see a name which ends with *wick*, you can only judge whether it is Saxon or Danish by

its position, and we cannot in every case be quite sure.

If it is some way inland, then it is probably Saxon, for their *wick* simply means "a dwelling." But if it is by the seaside or near a river, then we may safely consider that the Danes once settled there, for *wick* or *wig* in their language means "a creek."

The same year in which the Danes destroyed Stow, they gave a martyr saint to East Anglia.

Egbert had been made king of all England, but there were still some under-kings; and in the days of Ethelred, the last king before Alfred the Great, the king of East Anglia was Edmund, a name which all East Anglians ought to revere.

The Danes swept into Norfolk and Suffolk, as they had swept into Lincolnshire. The banner of the Saxons bore on it the device of a white horse; that of the Danes displayed a fierce black raven. And now this dreaded banner floated in the breeze before the Danish host, on the wide, heathy commons of Norfolk and Suffolk; and King Edmund and his brave East Anglian followers came out to meet the enemy, in battle array.

Fighting like the brave man he was, King Edmund kept the foe at bay for some time; but at last the day went against him. But the Danes said they would spare his life if he would give up Christ.

But this King Edmund would not do. What would life be worth to him if he denied his Master? No! Let them do their worst! He would continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.

So the Danes bound him to an oak tree, and after cruel tortures they shot him to death with arrows.

The place where he died was Hoxne in Suffolk, and the field where he suffered martyrdom is still called the King's Meadow.

More than nine hundred years later that oak tree fell. It had always been called the King's Oak. But there are some people who take no heed of tradition, and will not believe what they cannot see.

But now came a marvellous proof of the story of the King's Oak.

The old tree, which had weathered so many centuries, fell. And there, in what was left of it, were found two arrow-heads, deep buried in its heart.

More than a century after the martyrdom in 1017, when Cnut, the Danish king, reigned in England, he tried to make reparation for the sins of his ancestors by raising a noble abbey over the tomb of East Anglia's martyr king. The town is called Bury St. Edmunds unto this day.

The arms of the county of Suffolk, of Bury, and of one other town in that county whose church is dedicated to St. Edmund, are very simple and beautiful. They consist of a royal crown with two crossed arrows in and through it, symbolising his earthly state and the Cross for which he died, and with a deeper meaning still, as we remember the dear baptismal hymn—

“ Thus outwardly and visibly  
 We seal thee for His own,  
 And may the brow that bears the cross  
 Hereafter wear the crown.”

But the Danes did not stop short at the coasts.

They swept like a devouring flood all over the country, and the most famous monasteries were burnt to the ground. It is a terrible list: Jarrow, Wearmouth, York, Bardney, Ely, Peterborough, Crowland, Canterbury, Winchester—none were spared.

The famous libraries of Benedict Biscop, of Theodore and Hadrian, were utterly destroyed. And still the people, clergy, and laity alike prayed on: "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us!"

And at last deliverance came.

Alfred the Great was the only king who had any real success in fighting against the Danes; and they taxed even his great powers to the very utmost.

But he was not only a brave warrior, but a very wise man; and after he had shown them that he was conqueror, he allowed them to settle peaceably on certain lands which he gave to them. And, above all, he had them instructed in the Christian faith.

It cost Alfred seven years of great suffering and constant fighting to settle the affairs of England. But the Peace of Wedmore brought order again into the land. The Danes accepted the Christian religion and settled down. But it took sixty years to finally subdue them and blend them with the English nation.

But as soon as ever there was peace, then Alfred did his best for the Church he loved.

England had not had so wise or learned a man as Alfred since the days of Alcquin. He was not only learned, but very good; and now his great wish

was to restore to the Church, as far as possible, what she had lost through the Danes.

There were some losses which could never be made good ; but what was possible to do, that he did, and he did it well.

Many of the bishops' sees were vacant for lack of able men to fill them ; but Alfred had the power of finding out suitable men for high places. Plegmund, a hermit, was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and proved himself worthy of the king's choice. Asser, a distinguished Welsh priest, related to the learned Novis, Bishop of St. David's, was made Bishop of Sherborne, and thus another step was taken towards welding the old British Church and the English Church into one. This was one of the great successes of the ninth century.

Asser was not the only great scholar of that day whom Alfred loved to have near him, though he was the king's very special friend and counsellor.

Others were John from Germany, Grimbold from France, and John Scotus Erigena from Scotland. Through these great scholars he began the revival of learning in the monasteries, for new ones were now steadily rising over the ashes of the old. Alfred also founded two new ones : one at Shaftesbury, the other at Athelney. His daughter, Ethelgiva, was the first abbess of Shaftesbury.

Alfred was certainly a wonderful man. Not only did he settle the affairs of the nation in a remarkable manner, he did his very utmost to restore not learning alone, but true religious life in the monasteries, and he made very wise laws for the kingdom.

And above all his laws he put the Ten Commandments, showing that we must, first of all, be subject to the law of God.

Then, though he was probably the busiest man of his time, he contrived, by order and rule, to do an immense amount of literary work. He not only wrote but translated valuable books; among them a Latin Pastoral, which was for the use of the clergy, especially the bishops. For he desired earnestly that men should be holy who dealt with holy things.

His friend Asser, Bishop of Sherborne, wrote the *Life of King Alfred*, who was genuinely loved by his people, and is most justly styled by every one, Alfred the Great.

He died in 901.

Happily for England, Edward the Elder, who succeeded Alfred, was anxious to keep what his father had begun, and he had still for his advisers, Grimbold the priest, Asser, Bishop of Sherborne, and Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Danes again needed keeping in order, for they had risen in Mercia and Wessex. But Edward's advisers helped him to be active in Church affairs as well, which was perhaps not very easy in those sorely troubled times.

Wessex was a very large diocese and needed dividing, so two new sees were created—Wells and Crediton. Berkshire and Wiltshire formed one new see, the see of Ramsbury, which no longer exists; Salisbury has long taken its place.

I think all of us who love to read of the Northumbrian Church must grieve over its sadly

altered condition. It had now only two bishops, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Lindisfarne, who still kept his title, though his church was now at Chester-le-Street.

Northumbria was held by a Danish under-king, and quite cut off from Canterbury.

Wessex, both in Church matters and State affairs, was now quite the most important part of England.

But if Wessex was gaining, East Anglia was losing ; and Dunwich, which had been so famous not only as a royal and mercantile city, but as the see founded by St. Felix, was bereft of its bishop. Its day was done.

Reft of thy bishop in those times of sorrow,  
 Robbed of thy state, thy splendour, and thy fame,  
 The sea is powerless to abuse thy greatness,  
 A greatness heavenly which knows no shame.

Yet lives in countless souls the faith St. Felix  
 Taught in the far-off days for miles around ;  
 The torch once lighted ne'er has been extinguished,  
 The land he lived for still is faithful found.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### ODO, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, AND ST. DUNSTAN

THE Danes had now taken root in England, and though they were by no means always quiet subjects, yet the worst difficulties seemed over.

And now we come to an Archbishop of Canterbury who was himself a Dane, converted to the Christian Faith.

Like all the Northmen, he was fond of fighting; and though that is not a quality we desire or approve in a bishop, we can understand that he thought it no evil to take up arms when the Church and country were in danger.

He was made Bishop of Ramsbury in 926, and on three occasions afterwards we find him in the field of battle.

At the great fight of Brunanburg in 937, which completed the subjection of the Danes, he saved the life of King Athelstan.

He had suffered very much persecution from his own family when he became a Christian, and the people of his adopted country had been so kind to him, that now he gladly risked his life for his Church and king.

I told you the difference between the religious and the secular clergy. The religious, as the word tells us, were bound by their vows as monks; and one of these vows was, that they would never wear armour nor bear arms. But bishops and parish priests were secular clergy, living in the world, and not bound by monastic vows.

The bishops, in the early days of the English Church, had ruled their dioceses and had worked for the good of the Church hand in hand with the kings. But now, not only in Church matters but in what concerned the country, they had great power.

I want you to remember two words you will constantly meet with in history—one is *ecclesiastical*, the other is *civil*.

*Ecclesiastical* comes from the Latin word *ecclesia*, the Church. *Civil* comes from the Latin word *civis*, a city.

Civil power means the power of the State or nation. Ecclesiastical power means the power of the Church. Civil history is the history of the nation. Ecclesiastical history is the history of the Church. Ecclesiastic means a Churchman.

In the time of Egbert and his successors, civil and ecclesiastical affairs were so mixed up that what affected one affected the other. Church and State had always gone hand in hand; but now, sometimes when difficulties arose it was a little perplexing to know whether civil or ecclesiastical authority should decide them.

Now, after the monasteries had been restored in place of those which had been so ruthlessly destroyed

by the Danes, a great change passed over them. They were more the seats of learning than of spiritual life; and the rule each monastery observed had either become less strict than of old, or the monks themselves were less in earnest.

At any rate, they were not the holy places they had formerly been. Even when the rule of the monastery was kept, the heart seemed to have gone out of it.

A great deal of this falling off was due to the destruction of all the old life and ways and books and traditions. But more, far more, was owing to the lax way in which the rule was kept.

Still more was due to the fact that there was not one great supreme rule to which all the monasteries owed obedience, but every abbey had a rule of its own. When there was no outside and superior government or check, they did often very much as they liked, and there was no one to interfere.

We must now go back a little.

In the sixth century a holy man, St. Benedict of Nursia in Italy, drew up a very strict rule for monasteries; and in Italy and France it was *the* rule for all the religious houses.

Benedict Biscop had tried to introduce it at Wearmouth, and Wilfrid at Ripon; but it had never found real or lasting favour.

This was perhaps because Englishmen always did dislike to accept anything foreign. But although they were perfectly right in refusing to let the Pope, a foreign bishop, settle our Church affairs for us, they were foolish in this.





GLASTONBURY ABBEY

If a rule or a custom is good, surely it does not matter whether it comes from Rome, or France, or Greece, or anywhere else. The question is not, Who made the rule? but is the rule good in itself?

The good St. Benedict of Nursia and his successors had proved the rule to be good. And now Odo, who was a very earnest man and was sadly troubled at the state of the monasteries, tried to bring them all under the Benedictine Rule.

In 942 he was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury; and the first thing he did was to go to the monastery of Fleury in France, in order to take the vows; because he said if he wished to reform the monasteries and the monks, he must be a monk himself.

So, on his return, he at once set about reforming the monasteries.

This was no easy work; but he had a splendid helper in Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury. In fact, Dunstan did much more than even Odo himself.

In the tenth century there was no such remarkable man as Dunstan. I must tell you about him.

You have not read much about Glastonbury, the Glassy Isle, in Somerset; because there is so very much that is pure legend in its story that we cannot take it as fact. But one thing we do know: it was one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, monastery in Britain.

In the year 924 there was born at Glastonbury, or near it, a boy destined to influence the affairs of Church and State during the reigns of seven kings.

He was of noble birth, and was the most attractive, charming, clever, gifted, and influential person of his time, as well as being one of the most devoted.

Though the old British monastery of Glastonbury was partly in ruins, it had a school, where the boy Dunstan was educated, and where we may be quite sure he was no drone.

When very young, while Athelstan was king, he went to court, and there he could do so very many things that no one else could, in music, painting, and working in metals, that the other nobles, his companions, said he was a sorcerer, and had learnt all these things from Satan himself.

This was very hard upon Dunstan, who was only using the talents which God had given him. But he was in advance of the time he lived in, and that is what ignorant people always persecute.

When the ignorant are anxious to learn, they look up with reverence to those who know more and are more talented than they are. And, their attitude being docile, they are not above owning how little they know, and how very much there is to be known which they cannot yet possibly understand.

But when people are content to be ignorant they are so conceited, thinking they know as much as there is need to know about things that they are very jealous of those who know more; especially if these are gifted, enthusiastic people who attempt things which others had not dreamed of.

Instead of humbly and gladly recognising the superior talent, they are jealous, and call it by some wrong name. Boys and girls would say, "It was

showing off"; men and women would call it, "tempting Providence."

You will find this occur over and over again in the lives of great inventors or of scientific men.

The persecution of Dunstan was so severe that he left the court and went to stay with his uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, who tried to persuade him to become a monk.

Dunstan had a fearful struggle, because he was so fitted to shine at court, and he loved society and living in the world, and many things which a monk has to give up.

However, he fought his great battle and, in God's strength, conquered.

He took the vows; and for some time lived a very quiet and secluded life at Glastonbury.

But he was far too valuable to be left there. Athelstan was dead; and his successor, King Edmund, who knew Dunstan well, recalled him to court, and listened to his wise counsels, ordering his life accordingly.

We must not forget that Althelstan had done some good work for the Church by founding a bishopric in Cornwall; and in other ways he had tried to draw together the Welsh and the English Church.

In 945 King Edmund made Dunstan abbot of Glastonbury.

Dunstan was very young, only one and twenty, and he was very full of energy. He set to work at once to restore the famous monastery, rebuilding the church, and working with his own hands in bell-casting, organ building, and whatever else needed

doing which he was able to do. It was most inspiring to the men to work under such a head; and he encouraged every one to do his very best for the glory of God, and the beautifying this most famous monastery of the West Country.

But, much more than this, he did an immense amount of spiritual work, using his marvellous influence for good, and making the school the best of his time.

King Edmund was killed by Leolf, a robber, and he was buried at Glastonbury.

Edred, the next king, was in delicate health, and Dunstan was once more at court, the king's adviser and his friend; helping the king's mother in many difficult matters.

He loved the young, suffering King Edred so dearly that, when he wished to make him Bishop of Crediton, he would not hear of it, saying he would not leave him as long as he lived.

At Edred's death, Edwy succeeded to the throne. He was not a good man; and because Dunstan interfered, as became a holy man to interfere, with the king's wrong-doing, he was banished the country.

He retired to Flanders, where he saw so much of the beauty and worth of the Benedictine Rule, he embraced it himself. In 957 he was recalled to England, and then he determined to do his best to introduce this rule in all the monasteries.

Then he was made Bishop of Worcester, and afterwards of London. Promotion came rapidly, and wherever he was, there he worked to the utmost of his ability and strength.

In the reign of Edgar, surnamed the Peaceful, Dunstan practically ruled the country.

He had wonderful insight, and knew exactly where to place people in positions of power, and how to act in a crisis ; which means, in the history of a nation, when events crowd one upon another, and those in office get so worried and perplexed by opposing claims, they cannot quite see what to do. At such a time all depends upon a wise settlement of affairs. One false step at such a time may upset the whole country and plunge it into a civil war.

Only a man of genius is equal to such an occasion, and in Edgar's time Dunstan was that genius.

Civil wars, or wars between people of the same nation, were easily provoked in those days, when the Danes were often restless and the English were very ready to take offence. But Dunstan steered the good ship of the State safely through the troubled waters into peaceful anchorage.

As to the Church, Dunstan, who was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 959, did his very utmost to make it worthy of its great Founder, Christ.

“ The Church's one Foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord :  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word ;  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy Bride,  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.”

This is the Church for which St. Dunstan strove.

He was fully convinced that the Benedictine Rule tended to better and more spiritual living, and so he

enforced it everywhere in his province—in the monasteries already existing, and in the forty new ones founded during the reign of Edgar.

Many disputes arose between the seculars and the regulars, or monks. And Dunstan settled them with calm judgment and wisdom.

Two more kings came under his influence, Edward the Martyr and Ethelred the Unready.

But the last—lazy, unstable, never ready for action, unreliable in every way—could not endure the energetic, clear-sighted, prompt, and able statesman-archbishop.

So, after being the adviser of seven kings, and saving the country from untold miseries, he spent his last days earnestly ruling his province, and living a life which was like a light shining in a dark place.

It must have tried his spirit sadly to see how the foolish king let the Danes get the upper hand, and once more drag the country through the miseries of war and famine and general devastation. But he could still pray for his Church and country; and “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Many absurd stories have been written about St. Dunstan by his enemies, who could not appreciate his worth. And his friends too were very foolish in many things they wrote about him.

But through all the mist of ignorance and superstition surrounding him the real man shines forth—Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, England’s greatest man in the tenth century, great both in Church and State.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### ST. ALPHEGE, THE MARTYR

**I**T is very difficult to explain all the ins and outs of disputes about the monks and the secular clergy; but one thing you must remember, that St. Dunstan was always on the side of the monks.

And remember, too, that though he thought very much of the Pope, he would owe him no allegiance, and refused to obey him when he considered him in the wrong.

Dunstan spent years in trying to reform the monasteries, for he wished the rule of those who lived there to be as perfect as possible, so that in obedience to that rule their lives might also grow towards perfection.

His own abbey of Glastonbury naturally came in for very much of Dunstan's powerful help; and King Edgar helped him generously. Glastonbury, through the influence of St. Dunstan and the laws of Edgar, had privileges given it above all other religious houses in the land. And as long as it existed, its abbot was first of all. Its school was very famous, one of the best in England.

Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, was a great friend of Dunstan, and was like him in many

respects, having similar tastes and talents. He also held the same views about the monks and the secular clergy.

But he was cast in a sterner mould than that of the great archbishop. If he wanted a thing he did not consider any one's feelings, but carried out his will sharply and unsparingly.

One great object that he and Dunstan were always striving for, was to have all the cathedral clergy monks. Now, as many of these were seculars, it was no easy task to make them conform.

Ethelwold, like most reformers, could see only one side of a question. In this he was inferior to Archbishop Dunstan, who, with his large heart and mind and great sympathy, saw two sides; for there are always two sides to a question, and often more.

But Dunstan acted as he judged was for the best, and no doubt so did Ethelwold; and, in a great measure, they succeeded in carrying out the much-needed reforms.

Ethelwold died in 984; Dunstan in 988.

Northumbria had been so cut off from the south of England that there has been lately little to record of the once active centre of Church life. But, at this time, there was a very wise Archbishop of York, Oswald, who worked his reforms as Dunstan did, with kindness and moderation.

The see of Lindisfarne was finally established at Durham in 995.

We must not forget a very strong upholder of Dunstan, Thurkitul, who had held office at the court of Edgar the Peaceful.

He worked with all his might with Dunstan for Church and State; but he ended his days at St. Guthlac's abbey of Crowland, which was now restored and beautified. He was the first abbot of the new monastery.

The country paid dearly for the loss of Dunstan from the king's side. It is perfectly certain that England would not have gone to rack and ruin, as it did in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, if he had had a strong statesman to guide him like St. Dunstan.

Ethelred married Emma, a daughter of Richard, Duke of Normandy. This event may seem to belong more to civil than ecclesiastical history; but it had great bearing on what afterwards befell the nation.

When you are old enough to read the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for yourself, you will see what a dreadful state of unrest the country was in through the constant uprisings of the Danes; and how impossible it was to keep them under with such a "redeless," or unreliable, king at the head of affairs.

What was wanted was a good, strong ruler; for an incompetent or heedless captain may wreck a noble ship, and this is what Ethelred the Unready did for England.

In 991 the Danes destroyed Ipswich, and then Siric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who could not have had much wisdom, advised the foolish king to pay the Danes a large sum of money to keep away.

This was a fatal thing to do; for, of course, if the Danes found it profitable to go on with their lawless conduct, they would do so.

In 994, Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olaf, king of Norway, came and wrought terrible havoc everywhere.

Then for a while there was a little peace. But in 1002, the year he married Emma, Ethelred did a most wicked thing. The Danes were quiet just then, but a rumour had been allowed to spread that they were about to rise. Whereupon Ethelred ordered all of them, men, women, and children, to be massacred one dark November day, on the festival of St. Brice.

After this we cannot wonder that the Danish king, Sweyn, invaded England, and pursued his revengeful way with fire and sword. He destroyed every place he came near; and burned Norwich to the ground.

After this there was for many years never any peace at all.

In 1013 Ethelred had to flee for his life. It was all the coward king could do; a brave man would have fought for it. Queen Emma and her two boys, Edward and Alfred, had fled to Normandy some time before.

For one year Sweyn was king. But then Ethelred's son, Edmund Ironside, and Cnut, the son of Sweyn, fought for the mastery.

It was settled in 1016 that they should share the kingdom. But very soon the brave King Edmund died; and then Cnut reigned alone. How sad for England to see the Danes triumphant!

And was the Church still holding on through all the troubles?

Most certainly she was.

You have not forgotten that our Lord, just before His Ascension, bade His disciples go to all nations and baptize them.

Now He knew this would be a very hard task. He could see all the toils and dangers and difficulties ahead, and so He gave them a most loving and comforting promise: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

And that has helped Christ's faithful servants in all ages, for we know He never breaks His Word.

It was the Presence of our Lord in that Upper Room at Jerusalem, where they met for the "breaking of the Bread," which helped that little band of disciples as they went forth to obey their Lord's command, and spread the glad tidings far and wide.

It was that Presence which cheered them in prison, through tortures and in cruel deaths; that Blessed Presence, the fulfilment of those words of Love: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It was that Presence which sustained and kept alive in Wales and Strathclyde that poor remnant of the old British Church, driven westward by the Saxons after the Romans had left.

It was that Presence which made brave and strong and full of yearning love the great St. Columba and his monks on the lonely isle of Iona, and bore them up through all the perils of their many journeys. It was that Presence which enabled Paulinus to tarry the Lord's leisure in Northumbria, till the desire of his heart was given him.

And nothing but that loving Presence could have kept the faithful James the deacon steadfast at his post in Northumbria, when nearly all seemed lost.

What but that Presence could have kept up the hearts of the sorrowing monks of Lindisfarne, as for years they wandered, seeking an abode for themselves and the bier of their beloved St. Cuthbert?

It was that Presence in monastery and college and village church, yes! and in the hermit's cell, which called forth patience and endurance in darkest days of trouble and distress. So now, when the nation was torn and rent by hostile tribes, and earthly peace seemed to have fled for ever, it was that Presence, in Church, in Sacraments, in the weary hearts of men of prayer, which kept the Faith alive,—the Presence of the Lord who bought us, "Immanuel, God with us."

And if in a short History like this I can only give you the names of a few remarkable men who stand out from their fellows, you must not think they were the only heroes of that unhappy time. Not only in the monasteries, where the brethren worked and toiled and prayed and sang; in the colleges and schools, where learning was diligently pursued; at court, where everything was done "in that fierce light which beats upon a throne,"—not there only, but in little wayside places and quiet homes, that Holy Presence kept the flame of love alight. At all times and everywhere the Lord is with His people, strengthening, consoling, keeping. This we must never doubt. It is true, and always will be; for it is God's promise, and that cannot fail.

So the Church still held on, as she holds on now.

“Though with a scornful wonder,  
Men see her sore opprest,  
By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distrest :  
Yet saints their watch are keeping,  
The cry goes up, “How long?”  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song.”

But in the days immediately succeeding St. Dunstan, in fact during the next thirty years, we only hear of two great men—Elfric, a very great scholar, and St. Alphege, the martyr Archbishop of Canterbury.

Alphege was a Benedictine monk of very holy life; and one of the last things St. Dunstan did was to place him in the see of Winchester as successor to the famous Ethelwold.

True to the traditions of our missionary Church, Bishop Alphege tried to convert King Olaf of Norway when he came on that unfriendly visit of which I told you, and he also sent missionaries to Norway and Sweden, thus sowing good seed which afterwards grew up and bore fruit a thousandfold.

In 1006 Alphege became Archbishop of Canterbury. He ruled the province well and wisely, and was much beloved. But his lot was cast in such turbulent times that peace could not be long his portion, and the restless condition succeeding the terrible outbreak following the massacre of St. Brice's Day went on for years and years.

In 1011, Canterbury the beloved city was besieged. Alphege defended the cathedral, took care of the

soldiers' spiritual needs, celebrating the Holy Communion for them, helping them to keep up heart.

For nineteen days the city held out ; and then a most terrible thing happened,—it was betrayed and burnt.

The Danes took the archbishop prisoner, and kept him in captivity on their ships for seven months.

There, true to his high calling, he tried to convert the sailors. But the Danes resented this.

They told him they would set him free if he would pay a large ransom.

This he might have done by selling the sacred vessels of the cathedral, and by giving money which belonged to the Church.

But, of course, Alphege, as a Christian, could not do this great wickedness. He chose rather to die than bring dishonour on the cause of Christ.

One day, at Greenwich, the fierce Danes sent for him at one of their rude feasts that he might make sport for them.

They pelted him with huge ox bones and horns ; but he stood firm. At last one of them lifted his great axe and killed him.

Faithful friends took the good archbishop's body to London, and buried it in St. Paul's Cathedral. But afterwards, in more peaceful times, it was removed to Canterbury.

This is the story of St. Alphege the martyr, put to death by the Danes in 1012.

## CHAPTER XXX

### EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST

**I**F Ethelred had been a good and wise man, he might have saved not only the nation but the Church from much evil.

But this we shall see by and by.

When Cnut became sole king of England, you may be quite sure there were many questionings in the hearts of Englishmen as to the manner in which he would govern.

And, at first, there seemed a prospect of very hard times for the English. But before long Cnut quite altered. He had been baptized before he came to the throne, but had not lived up to his profession. Now he began a new life.

He had for his friend and spiritual adviser, Ethelnoth, whom he made Archbishop of Canterbury.

He showed great wisdom in the way he ruled the nation, treating English and Danes alike, and he became a devoted son of the Church.

He spent his money lavishly on church building and in all good works ; and he showed his sorrow for the cruel conduct of the Danes by building a large and beautiful abbey over the tomb of St. Edmund at

Bury, and in removing the body of St. Alphege to its proper resting-place in Canterbury Cathedral.

On the whole they were very peaceful, those years of Cnut's reign; and when he died in 1035, the English people must have been very sorry; and they were unhappier still later on.

For the two sons of Cnut who came after him, Harold and Harthacnut, were such very bad men that no one could have any respect for them at all.

But when Harthacnut, the younger of the two, died, then the English felt their hopes revive; for Edward, son of Ethelred the Unready, now came to the throne, and the old English line was restored.

But they were disappointed; and now I will tell you how Ethelred's unwise and slothful conduct did harm to the Church, not only in his own time, but in future years.

If he had been a good man and had ruled the nation well, his two little sons, Edward and Alfred, would not have had to leave England to be brought up at the Norman court.

Their mother, Queen Emma, was Norman, as you remember, and it was quite natural that her children should take kindly to Norman ways of thought, especially in Church matters; and we must bear in mind that the Normans were a cultivated people, quite the leaders of Europe in the eleventh century.

The Pope had great influence with the Normans, very much more than he had ever had with the English. So it came to pass that through the upbringing of Edward, who was called the Confessor, he soon had great power in England.

The first step Edward took after he became king was to fill all the vacant places of importance with foreigners instead of English.

And this was in spite of his having for chief counsellor, Godwin, the wise and powerful Earl of Wessex.

Soon there were two parties in the kingdom: the patriotic side, under Godwin, and the foreign party, under a Norman bishop, Robert of Jumièges, who had been consecrated Bishop of London, and was afterwards made Archbishop of Canterbury.

We can understand how bitterly the English resented this introduction of Norman bishops and earls and statesmen into posts rightfully belonging to themselves.

The stout hearts of Englishmen have always resented interference from foreigners, as has been shown over and over again.

If a country cannot manage its own affairs, it is in a very poor way; and England had no need of foreign help.

The Normans, as I have told you, were a cultivated people, certainly in advance of the English in the fine arts, and they were more polished in their manners. To have had some intercourse with Normandy would have done England good; but it was quite another thing for the English to see their own priests supplanted by the Normans whom Edward chose to put in their place; and they did not like to see so many Normans about the court.

Edward, though weak, was a good man and deeply

religious ; but far more fitted to wear a monk's cowl than a king's crown.

Godwin, with his powerful will and great wisdom, steered the country through a good many difficulties, but even he was overpowered at last by the foreign party, and was banished in 1051.

He went to Flanders ; his son Harold crossed over to Ireland, and the Queen Edith, who was Godwin's daughter, went into a nunnery. A nunnery was an abbey for women.

The Normans now had it all their own way ; and Duke William of Normandy came over to visit his cousin, King Edward, and to see how the land lay.

This was an unfortunate visit for England ; for William, whose will was strong and his ambition great, persuaded the weak King Edward into making a promise, that when he died, William should succeed to the English throne.

Now this was a most unjust promise to make, as there was an English heir to the throne whose claim was much greater than William's could possibly be. Perhaps Edward thought it would be better for the Church and please the Pope more if a Norman were king, instead of a sturdy Englishman who would hold his own.

But even if he thought it would be good for England, he was wrong : we must never do evil that good may come.

The Norman power at this time did not last very long.

In 1052 Godwin and his son Harold took London by storm ; for they sailed up the Thames, determined

to conquer, and conquer they did; and all the Normans had to flee.

The people turned to Earl Godwin as their deliverer; and so strong was the feeling against the Normans, that Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, when fleeing for his life, had to cut his way with his sword through the streets of London.

For a few months there was peace; and then Godwin died.

Harold succeeded him as counsellor to the king, and head of the patriotic party. But though a very brave man, he was not so wise as his father, and did some illegal things.

Perhaps the chief of these was putting Stigand, Bishop of Winchester, into Robert's place at Canterbury.

Now this was very much what had been done in Wilfrid's time, when, he being absent, Chad was made Bishop of York, although the see belonged to Wilfrid.

Edward very much disliked Stigand, and he knew that his being at Canterbury was uncanonical; that is, not according to Church law. Nor was the archbishop very acceptable to the English.

Harold had not the sense to see that Canterbury could not have two archbishops at a time; and this act of his did a great deal of harm, even with the king, who for some things liked his brother-in-law, Harold.

Then, again, Edward was all on the side of the monks, while Harold was dead against them. To show this, when he built a beautiful church at Waltham, the religious house attached to it was

made a college, not a monastery, and the clergy were seculars.

All this time Edward the Confessor was going on in his own way doing very little in the State, and what he did being the reverse of wise. But he gave England one of her greatest possessions, he built Westminster Abbey.

Perhaps I should rather say he rebuilt it, for there had been a monastery there in very early times.

The place where it was built was an island, surrounded with very swampy ground. It was called Thorney Island, and was outside the western boundary of London.

When a name ends with *ey* or *ea*, you may be tolerably sure it was once an island, whatever it may be now. There is another Thorney in England, in Cambridgeshire, and it had an abbey too. In those days the people who built monasteries never seemed to mind how dreary and damp a place was. They wished to be out of the world, so it was not likely they would choose a spot which looked inviting to others. They drained the swamp and planted trees, and, in time, they made the place beautiful, but it was not so at first.

Once it had been a dense thicket of rushes, osiers, and brambles—not as bad as Crowland, perhaps, but something like it in a small way. And it was so near the river Thames that, a few years ago, when the grave of a famous man was dug there, they came, many feet deep, upon sand which still had the wave-marks of the river upon it.

But it was not a forlorn and dreary waste so late as



WESTMINSTER ABBEY



1051, when Edward began to build. He took infinite pains with it; and here his Norman education told, for he had Normans for workmen, and they were, as architects, very much in advance of the English.

In 1061 the abbey was finished, and then Edward began to build the beautiful church.

All this while the king's health was growing more and more feeble, and the people began to wonder who would wear the crown if he died.

Harold had been wrecked on the coast of Normandy in 1054; and while there he had sworn an oath to Duke William that he would support his claim to the English crown.

It was said that William deceived Harold when he compelled him to take this oath. But this does not justify Harold. It was a wrong thing to do, and had terrible consequences later on.

Now in 1065, as King Edward grew weaker and weaker, his beautiful church was nearing completion, and on Holy Innocents' Day it was consecrated.

Thus was fulfilled the heart's desire of Edward the Confessor. But he was very ill on the day of its consecration, and a few days later the beautiful new church became his tomb.

With his dying breath he had bequeathed his crown to Harold.

English people were very glad when Harold's succession was confirmed by the Witan. But across the Channel there was quite another feeling; and William, Duke of Normandy, prepared to make good his claim.

Now, if Harold had honestly sworn to help

William, he was bound to keep his oath. But it has been said it was wrung from him unfairly.

We cannot say how this was. But the English were all for Harold, and believed he was the rightful heir, because the king had given him the kingdom.

But in the autumn of 1066, William prepared to set sail for England with a powerful army; and the Pope blessed his expedition.

You know the rest. How bravely the English fought at Senlac to save their dear country from the Normans; fought most bravely, but were overpowered, and their leader Harold was killed.

William of Normandy became William the Conqueror, and with the Norman Conquest came in a new order of things, both in Church and State; and so the history of the early Church is ended in 1066.

The after-history of our Church is one of intense interest. But a fresh and never-fading charm encircles, as with a halo, its early days.

In the second chapter of this book we spoke of the beauty of the sunrise; and we have seen the Sun of Righteousness arise upon our island, and it leaves a tender glow behind.

Perhaps we admire the sunrise so much, we would rather not see the full day disperse its beauty. But that would never do.

The lovely sunrise only begins the work which daylight calls for: all things go on to perfection. The sweet spring-time melts into perfect summer, the little child becomes a man. Everything grows.

If we feel sorry to part from our story of the Early English Church, we must remember this, and look forward. For the path of the Church must be "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect Day."

END OF PART I.



## AUTHORITIES

ADAMNAN'S *Life of St. Columba.*

BEDE'S *Ecclesiastical History.*

COLLINS' *Beginnings of English Christianity.*

LIGHTFOOT'S *Leaders in the Northern Church.*

OVERTON'S *Church in England.*

WAKEMAN'S *History of the Church of England.*



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